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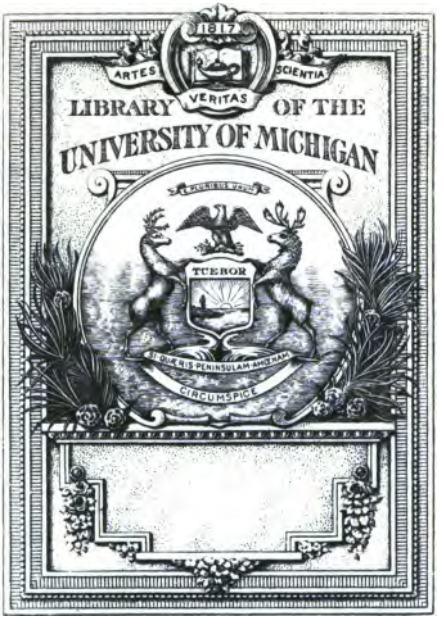

From the library of
Edwin C.Goddard

82
P3
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Paulding, James Kirke.

WESTWARD HO!

A TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DUTCHMAN'S FIRESIDE,"

&c. &c. &c.

"Come all you likely lads that has a mind for to range,
Into some foreign country, your situation for to change;
In seeking some new pleasures we will altogether go,
And we'll settle on the banks of the pleasant Ohio.

Come all you girls from New England that are unmarried yet,
O come along with us, and young husbands you shall get;
For there's all kinds of game besides the buck and doe,
To hunt with dog and rifle all on the Ohio."

Ballad.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

HARPER & BROTHERS, 82 CLIFF STREET.

1845.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1832, by
HARPER & BROTHERS,
in the Clerk's Office of the Southern District of New-York.

gift
From the library of
Edwin C. Goddard
5-27-44

TO THE READER.

The devotees of sects and parties are exceedingly prone to imagine that every book, whatever may be its nature or object, is intended to operate in favour of or against their cherished doctrines or policy, and to test its opinions and sentiments by that standard alone. Such a rule, applied to fictions more especially, is calculated to put a tyrannical restraint on an author in the delineation of characters, as well as in detailing the sentiments and language naturally growing out of their particular habits, manners, and situations. Having conceived a character, it should be his aim to make it act and talk as such a person might naturally be supposed to do in similar circumstances. But we think he ought not to be held responsible for this any farther than probability and the decorums of life are concerned. Neither, as it appears to us, is he justly chargeable with hostility to any particular class, or profession, or sect, if he should happen to exhibit a character for the purpose of exposing their occasional excesses or absurdities. All we conceive a writer justly responsible for, in this point of view, are those sentiments and opinions he puts forth when he appears in his own proper person, and makes his bow to the reader. Thus, for instance, the little exhibitions of hostility to the Yankees occasionally introduced in the following work are given as characteristic of the feelings and prejudices of those to whom they are ascribed, and not as the sentiments of the author. So also with regard to the scene in Philadelphia, which is simply an exhibition of what it is supposed would naturally be the

feelings of a sagacious slave in the situation and under the circumstances described. The author yields to none in respect for the motives of those who are sincerely anxious to rid this country of the embarrassments of slavery; and none more heartily wishes the thing were possible, at a less risk to the happiness of both master and slave.

The great aim of the author has been to combine an important moral, with the interest of a series of incidents, and sketches of scenery, character, manners, and modes of thought and expression, such as he knows or imagines exist, or have existed, in particular portions of the United States. The story professes no connexion with history, and aspires to no special chronological accuracy; though it is believed that sufficient regard has been had to truth in this respect to give it the interest of something like reality. For very many of his ideas of the great Mississippi Valley the author is under particular obligations to the "Recollections" of the Rev. Timothy Flint, which contain by far the most picturesque description of that remarkable region which has ever fallen under his observation. This work has not met its deserts, and he should be highly gratified if this passing notice served in any way to call the public attention to its interesting details.

New-York, May, 1832.

WESTWARD HO!

WESTWARD HO!

A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

"The dark and bloody ground."

Who that hath ears to hear hath not heard of "Old Kentucky," which, having now arrived at the age of almost forty years, is entitled to assume the honours of a patriarch among the young fry of empires springing up like mushrooms in the vast valley of the great father of waters? Its early history is a romance; its growth a miracle; its soil a garden; its women half angel, half heroine; and a portion of its men, as hath been credibly asserted, half horse, half alligator; to which has lately been added a third ingredient, in compliment to those monstrous productions of the genius of Fulton that now float on the rivers of the west, smoking like volcanoes, and scattering showers of fire, to wit, "a small sprinkling of the steamboat."

Less than seventy years ago there breathed not a single white man within its wide limits. In that short period, which scarcely comprises the life of a single individual, the face of the earth and the face of man have undergone a total change in this land of wonders. The wild exuberance of nature has given place to the rich products of

human labour; the wild animals of the forest have been superseded by peaceful flocks and herds; and the wild Indian has retired before that destiny which pursues him everywhere. Nothing but the rivers, the mountains, and the traditions, remain to attest the truth of the picture given by the early adventurers to this rich, romantic region. The nations of hunters, the wandering kings of the woods, who once claimed dominion over the deep, dark forests, and the beasts that inhabited them, and which might be termed, in truth, their only constant occupants, have by degrees disappeared, after a struggle of half a century, so keen, so extensive, so bloody and revengeful; so full of peril, suffering, and disasters; so fatal to the red man and the white, that this smiling, fruitful region, now the abode of almost a million of prosperous people, obtained, and still retains, in the traditions of past times, and in the memory of the old surviving settlers, the ominous, melancholy appellation of "THE DARK AND BLOODY GROUND."

The free, daring, and adventurous life of the early settlers in this land of promise, gave to themselves and their posterity a character of enthusiasm, vivacity, courage, hardihood, frankness, and generosity, which in some respects distinguishes them from the rest of mankind. Reared in the midst of dangers, and residing at a distance from each other; possessing in general large estates and numerous slaves; seeing few equals, and recognising no superiors; accustomed to think and act for themselves; their characters have a primitive energy, a singularly bold, fresh, and original cast. The settled forms and opinions, which have been adopted without inquiry, and followed as a matter of course by the older states have in a

flinched from a challenge of old Allen of Claremont."

"But Allen of Claremont has not challenged you, my dear."

"But he has challenged my horse, and that is just the same thing."

"The challenge is general."

"Yes, but I know he meant me. He can't get over being distanced the first heat at the last fall meeting at Tree Hill, by my three-year-old." And the colonel chuckled mightily at the recollection of his triumph over his old neighbour and rival Allen of Claremont.

"Well, colonel, if you are determined—"

"I am determined—but—but yet—I want to consult you a little about it."

"What, when you are determined?" said Mrs. Dangerfield, a little archly.

"I—I—I want your opinion, Cornelia," said Colonel Dangerfield, drawing his chair confidentially towards his wife.

"My opinion is always at your service, my husband, such as it is; and be assured that whatever it may want in discretion, is supplied by a desire which is never absent from my heart,—that of contributing to your honour and happiness."

"I know it, I know it," cried he, and the dotard kissed her tenderly, though they had been married almost nine years!

"Listen to me," and here his proud spirit hesitated for a moment; "I am in debt more than I have the means of paying."

"I know it, my dear."

"You know it!—in the name of heaven how

came *you* to know what I have tried all I could to keep secret?"

"Affection is both prying and sagacious. I have seen you every week of late receiving letters the handwriting of which I know, and the contents of which I know; for I know that you, my husband, never did any act in your life, save one, that could cause you to shrink from communications from any man living, and exhibit such melancholy feelings on reading them."

"And yet you never inquired about them! wonderful woman!"

"I wished to convince you that a woman can keep her tongue, if she cannot keep a secret," replied the lady, good-humouredly.

"Well, my dear, I am in debt, deeply in debt; my crops are mortgaged for three years at least; the merchant, when I call for farther advances, duns me for those already made. My only chance is upon Barebones,—I intend to risk twenty thousand at least, and if I win, as no doubt I shall, it will make me a man again."

"But if you lose?"

"No danger of that; Barebones may defy all Virginia. But if I should lose by any unlucky accident,—I shall be no worse off than before. I am already indebted more than I can pay without a miracle."

"Not so, my husband,—I think I can put you in a way of retrieving your affairs without a miracle."

"Ah! as how, Cornelia?"

"By saving your next three years' crops to pay the Scotch merchant."

"Save! impossible!" cried the colonel, in utter astonishment; "I never heard of such a thing

in the whole course of my life. How the deuse shall I go about it?"

"In the first place dispose of your race horses."

"Impossible! what will Allen of Claremont say to it?"

"Never mind what he says; he'll think you wiser than he ever did before. In the next place we must omit our winter's visit to Richmond."

'Impossible! what will Mrs. Grundy and all the rest of your old friends say?"

"Let them say what they please. I believe one half the miseries of this life originate in our foolish fears of what people will say of us. Let us do right, and let others wonder if they will."

"Well, well," said Colonel Dangerfield, shaking his head; "what next?"

"We must leave off keeping open house, and treating all comers."

"I'll be hanged if I do!" cried he, in a rage; "what, shut up my doors, like a miserable hunks, and turn my back and pretend not to see strangers as they pass? no, no, that won't do,—what will Randolph of Turkey Island say to that?"

"Why, what can he say, but that you have changed from an imprudent to a prudent man?"

"Prudence! prudence is a beggarly virtue, and I hate the very name of it. Randolph of Turkey Island swears it is a very aldermanly virtue, and I am of his opinion."

"It is a cardinal virtue."

"Yes, but not the virtue of a cardinal;" and the colonel laughed himself almost into good-humour at this happy turn; "well, what else?"

"We can turn the four carriage horses to the labours of the field, and use them on Sundays to go to church."

Now the colonel valued his carriage horses next unto his prime favourite Barebones. They were full brothers and full blooded, and their ancestors, we believe, came over with William the Conqueror. In short, they had a pedigree that might have figured in Ragman's roll, or that of Battle Abbey. The idea of degrading them to the plough overturned all the complacency of spirit engendered by the lucky joke about the cardinal, and the colonel waxed wroth.

"Yes," exclaimed he, "yes, turn the blood of the Godolphin Arabian to the plough tail, work them to skin and bone, till their sleek glossy coats become like the hair of a Narragansett pacer, and then hitch them to the carriage on Sunday, go to church on a snail's gallop, and have old Allen of Claremont laugh in his sleeve at us,—curse me if I ever heard of such an unreasonable woman. No, madam," continued he, with an air and tone of lofty sublimity, "no, madam, never shall it be said that Cuthbert Dangerfield turned a blood horse to a plough's tail, and disgraced his ancestors, himself, and his posterity. Hear me, Mistress Dangerfield!—Barebones shall enter against Molly Magpie, as sure as he has legs to run, and ground to run upon. Old Allen of Claremont shall never have it to say I refused his challenge." And the colonel, according to custom, went to consult with his prime confidant and counsellor, Mr. Ulysses Littlejohn, whom it may be proper to introduce to our readers.

This worthy wight was of an unknown relationship to Colonel Dangerfield, a sixteenth cousin removed, who on the score of his near connexion with the family was considered fully entitled to claim bed and board and maintenance at his hands. He

had inherited a pretty good estate which he spent like a gentleman,—that is to say, by paying no attention to his affairs, and wasting every year more than his income. This is an infallible method; but it was too slow for Mr. Littlejohn. Finding he was going down hill, he determined to relieve himself by a speculation. Accordingly he borrowed money, and built a mill on a fine stream of water which ran through his estate. This lucky hit would undoubtedly have retrieved his affairs, had not the stream soon after dried up in consequence of the draining of a great marsh about twenty miles off. Ulysses was advised to prosecute the owner of the marsh for this unneighbourly act. Accordingly he went to law, and everybody prophesied that he was a ruined man. The law, as all know who have had experience in the matter, is as it were a snail without legs. They say it actually does move, but it is not always that people can see it without spectacles. It is therefore little to be wondered at, that rogues should complain, as we are credibly informed they do, that the law is so slow they sometimes lose all patience before they are brought to the gallows. Be this as it may, Mr. Littlejohn waited patiently five years, and was rewarded at last by a decision against him. He was obliged to give a deed of trust on the remainder of his estate to pay a bill, which, if it had been cut into slices, would have made five dozen tailor's measures; and he was indebted for a mill that had no water to set it going. But he was predestined to happiness in this world in despite of fortune; everybody pitied him, yet he was the merriest rogue in all the country round, and did more laughing than any ten men in Virginia,—we

mean white men; for, notwithstanding the negroes are so unutterably miserable, it somehow or other happens that they are a hundred times merrier than their masters.

When the time came to pay the money he had borrowed, he offered his creditor the mill he had built with it. The creditor refused, and Mr. Littlejohn thought him a very unreasonable person. To make an end of the matter, in due time he was obliged to sell his estate, the proceeds of which were just sufficient to pay his debts; and at the age of eight-and-twenty, was left, as the phrase is, high and dry ashore, the most helpless, the most careless, and the most gentlemanly pauper, that ever broke bread in the house of a sixteenth cousin removed. In proportion as Ulysses grew poor, he multiplied his visits to Colonel Dangerfield, whose kindness increased with his poverty. At first he came only to dine, and it was amazing to see the relish with which he drank the colonel's wine, and cracked his jokes as if he had ten thousand a year. By degrees his visits became more frequent, and longer; he sometimes staid all night; from this he got to two or three days, and finally, when his estate departed from him, and he had nothing left but a blood horse descended from Flying Childers by the mother's side, he rode over to Powhatan,—gave his horse to one blackey, his saddle-bags to another, and quietly took possession of his accustomed room. No questions were asked, not a word said,—every thing was understood; he was perfectly welcome, and the matter was settled.

He had now remained upwards of six years an inmate of the family, and during all that time had never once talked of going away, that he

might be pressed to stay. Nay, what is still more remarkable, he had never been reminded by a look, a hint, a word of unkindness, a neglect of the servants, or an omission of the colonel to ask him to take wine, that he was a beggar and dependant. The blackeys loved Massa Leetlejohn, or Massa Lysses, as he was indifferently called, for he made them laugh at his odd jokes; the children of the house followed him about like pet lambs, for he had a pleasure in levelling himself to their capacity, shared in their amusements, made them whistles, told them stories, and gained their little hearts, by repressing all pretensions to superior wisdom. Mrs. Dangerfield was always particularly careful to have his room kept in order, his shoes well cleaned, his apparel whole and decent; and in the season of flowers, you never failed to see a bouquet placed on his table, and a bunch of evergreens in his fireplace.

As to the colonel, he had become so accustomed to Mr. Littlejohn, that he could not live without him. His easiness of temper, his pleasing disposition, his cheerful habit of mind, and, above all, his unparalleled knack at killing time, were invaluable qualities in a companion to a country gentleman, who read little, worked less, and was out of the sphere of those city amusements which in a great degree disarm idleness of its leaden sting. Never man was so expert at getting through a morning as Mr. Ulysses Littlejohn, without doing any earthly thing either for "posterity or the immortal gods." Many a time did he and the colonel set forth on horseback for a morning ride, and get no farther than the gateway, where they stopped peradventure to discuss the propriety of a new gate-post or some such

matter. The colonel loved conversation, but was not very fruitful in suggesting topics, or bringing ideas to bear upon them. When, therefore, he was lucky enough to get hold of a subject, he did not like to part with it in a hurry, any more than a dog does to resign his only bone, let it be ever so bare. He soon tired of a person who never contradicted him, for without something of this sort conversation is apt to fall dead to the ground. To do Ulysses justice, though a dependant, he felt his situation so lightly, or rather forgot it so entirely, that he never had the least hesitation in opposing the opinions of the colonel on all occasions where he really differed with him. Thus they lived together in perpetual collision, the best friends in the world, for they helped each other to kill time, and Mr. Littlejohn, in addition to his excellence at making indifferent jokes, had a still more invaluable faculty of laughing heartily at a dull one, after the manner of the members of the English parliament.

The colonel, who, as we premised, departed in wrath from the presence of Mrs. Dangerfield in search of Mr. Littlejohn, found that worthy, lounging as was his custom, about the stable; for there is a singular affinity between an idle man and a horse,—at least there was between Ulysses and honest Barebones, who never failed to twinkle his nostrils and utter a most significant chuckle whenever he received a visit from his friend.

"How is Barebones to-day, cousin Littlejohn?" said the colonel.

"Prime, colonel."

"Do you know that Mrs. Dangerfield says he would have been beaten at Tree Hill course last year if Betsey Richards had not bolted?"

If Mr. Littlejohn had not loved and respected Mrs. Dangerfield above all created beings, he would certainly have spoken, as it were, slightingly of her knowledge in horseflesh, for this gross slander of his friend; as it was, he only said,

"Pooh, colonel! what can a woman know about these matters?"

"Come, come, Ulysses; no reflections on my wife. I wish I may be shot if she isn't the cleverest woman in Virginia."

"Well, I know she is. Heaven forbid that I, who look up to her as an angel down here below, should say any thing in her disparagement. But it's no reflection on a woman to say she knows nothing about horseflesh."

"I tell you, Lyssy, she knows but every thing. I sometimes think the deuce is in her, for she seems to know more than I do—hey!"

"Why, I've sometimes thought so myself, colonel."

"Then you thought like a goose, Lyssy," rejoined the other, who did not like to have anybody agree with him in this surmise. "But, Lyssy,—here, Lyssy,"—and, beckoning him close, he half-whispered in his ear,

"I've a great mind to accept old Allen of Claremont's challenge, and run Barebones against Molly Magpie,—hey, boy?"

"Have you?" quoth Littlejohn, in the same tone, rubbing his hands.

"I'm determined on it."

"Are you, by gum!" exclaimed the other, in a suppressed voice of delight.

"Yes; but—but—do you think there is any truth in what Mrs. Dangerfield said about Barebones?"

"Not a word; he never was in better condition; and, to show you I am sincere in my opinion, damme, colonel, if I don't go your halves in the bet."

"Humph!" said the colonel; but he did not display as much gratitude at this generous offer as might be expected.

The result of this conference was a sudden journey of Mr. Littlejohn up to Richmond, and the subsequent appearance in the newspaper of an acceptance of the challenge of Allen of Claremont by Dangerfield of Powhatan, to run Barebones against Molly Magpie at the next October meeting for twenty thousand pounds, play or pay.

CHAPTER III.

Showing how the Gray Mare proved the better Horse in more ways than one.

ALL the opposition of Mrs. Dangerfield to the whims and freaks of the colonel was preventive. When the thing was past recall, she ceased to allude to it, unless it happened to turn out well, when she never failed to give him due credit and compliment him on his sagacity. When, therefore, she saw in the public papers the acceptance of the challenge of Allen of Claremont recorded in our last chapter, she knew the matter was decided, and kept her forebodings to herself. She even affected a cheerful confidence in the result, far different from her real anticipations. Should any of our bachelor readers wish to know where to find such a wonder of a woman, we will go so far to allay their curiosity as to assure them that there is actually such a one in the land of the living, and that she resides—the Lord knows where!

Time rolled on—the decisive hour approached—the worthy Mr. Littlejohn for once gathered himself together, cast aside the *vis inertiæ* with a mighty effort, and became a most indefatigable attendant on his illustrious friend Barebones, who was petted as never quadruped was petted before, except it might peradventure be a prize ox, a Teeswater bull, or a royal ram from the Rambouillet flock during the raging of the merino mania. It was now the charming month of October, when

the earth and its foliage, the sky, its sun and stars are so often shaded with a thin misty veil, that while it obscures the face of nature, at the same time renders it more touchingly beautiful. All Virginia was in motion, from the alluvial to the primitive formation, from Chesapeake Bay to the Blue Ridge. The high-mettled cavaliers of the "Ancient Dominion" mounted their high-mettled steeds, anticipated the next year's crop of tobacco, and came with pockets richly lined; and many an ample estate long after rued the racing of that day. Nor must we omit to record that Mrs. Dangerfield took occasion to remind the colonel, that as it was possible he might lose his bet of twenty thousand pounds, his honour required that he should be prepared to pay on the spot. He accordingly once more wrote to his old friend the Scotch merchant, offering to give him a deed of trust for his whole estate if he would advance the sum of forty thouand pounds. The proposal was accepted, the deed executed, and the inheritance of six generations became subject to the disposition of a stranger.

At length the day arrived big with the fate of Lady Molly Magpie and Barebones, of Allen of Claremont and Dangerfield of Powhatan,—and a glorious day it was. Previous to its arrival, Barebones had been escorted, with a dignity becoming the high destinies connected with his speed and bottom, to the neighbourhood of the racecourse. The colonel and Mr. Littlejohn rode on either side, while Barebones, richly caparisoned with a gorgeous blanket, and looking through a pair of holes, like an old gentleman through his spectacles, was led by uncle Pompey, or Pompey Ducklegs, as he was most irreverently nicknamed by the young ebonies, on the score of a pair of little

bandy drumsticks, by the aid of which he waddled along after the fashion of that amphibious bird. Pompey claimed and received this post of honour by virtue of having once had the felicity of belonging to Lord Dunmore, the last royal governor of Old Virginia. He considered himself as a branch of the aristocracy, often boasted that he was one of the few gentlemen left in the Ancient Dominion, and never failed to lay all the blame of bad crops on the revolution. When he recollected that Molly Magpie was an "imported" horse, and a lady besides, his mind misgave him sorely, for he could scarcely bring himself to believe it possible that any animal foaled on this side the Atlantic had a chance of success against one so high bred and highly descended. "Dem *rebel* horse no bottom," thought Pompey. Close behind Pompey the Great rode Pompey the Little, his grandson, to whom the conduct of Barebones was to be intrusted in the coming contest between the houses of Claremont and Powhatan. He was dressed in a sky-blue jacket, red cap, and pantaloons of the same colour; and his black face presented a beautiful contrast to the ivory teeth which he ever and anon displayed in rows the brightest beauty in the land might have envied, as he recalled to mind the promise of his master, that if he won the race, he would give him his freedom and a hundred a year for life. As thus they walked their horses slowly and majestically along, Pompey the Great would ever and anon turn round, shake his fist at Pompey the Little, and exclaim, "You young racksal, you no win dis here race, you disgrace you family—mind, I say so."

The race was to take place precisely at one o'clock, but long before the hour arrived the

course was thronged with thousands of people in carriages, on horseback, and on foot, of all grades, sizes, ages, and colours. The day was charming, the air inspiring, and the scene beautiful and animated beyond description. The racecourse was on an elevated table-land, which commanded a view of the city of Richmond, its imposing capitol (perhaps the finest situated building in the United States), the turbulent rapids of the majestic river foaming and pelting its way among the rocks and islands fast anchored in the waves, and afterwards winding its quiet course at a distance among the round full-bosomed hills, presented a scene which of itself might occupy the attention for hours. But the animation of the course rendered a long abstraction quite impossible. Gallant equipages every moment arriving, in which the pride of Virginia, her wives and daughters, displayed their fair and delicate countenances,—full-blooded horses champing the bit impatiently, and pawing the ground as if anxious to contest the prize of the day, or scouring the plain in all directions, like the winged Arabs of the desert, communicated indescribable gayety and interest to the scene. But the gayest of the gay, the happiest of the happy, the noisiest of the noisy, were the gentlemen of colour, young and old, to whom this was a holyday sanctioned by long prescription. Such a mortal display of ivory and crooked legs, such ecstatic gambols, such triumphant buffoonery, such inspiring shouts, such inimitable bursts of laughter never were seen or heard among the grave, reflecting progeny of freedom; and the spectator might have been tempted to ask himself, "If these are not happy, at least at the present moment, where is happiness to be found?"

At twelve the champions appeared, and all was hushed. The knowing ones followed Barebones and Molly Magpie around the course, scanning them with a keen and critical eye, and making up their minds to bet on one or the other. The coloured rout thronged along the way, looking as wise as their betters, and giving their opinions in prophetic whispers, or climbed the trees and fences to witness the coming trial. Allen of Claremont and Dangerfield of Powhatan met and saluted each other with the dignified courtesy of two knights of chivalry on the eve of a joust in honour of their respective ladies; and it was singular to observe with what a degree of interest and almost sublimity the ownership of two such famous horses and the large sums at stake invested these two gallant cavaliers. The crowd followed them whithersoever they went, and where they were was the centre of attraction.

Tap—tap—tap! went the drum for the second time,—the judges ascended the stand of judgment,—the horses were brought to the starting pole champing and foaming, as if partaking in the feelings of their masters, and equally anxious for the event of the struggle. For our part we have no doubt that race horses are perfectly aware of the object for which they are contesting, and share in the triumph of victory. The judges were now standing with stop watches counting the minutes, and a breathless silence preceded the last tap of the drum. It was a scene of almost unequalled excitement, and in spite of all that may be said in disparagement of the sport, we neither blame those that encourage, nor those who partake in its enjoyment, with due moderation.

Tap—tap—tap! went the drum for the third time. The riders were mounted, and the yellow cap and green vest of Allen of Claremont appeared side by side with the red cap and blue vest of Dangerfield of Powhatan. As Pompey the Great lifted Pompey the Little to the saddle, he repeated for the last time,

"Now you dem racksal, you no win dis race, you disgrace to you family."

The signal was given, and the two noble animals went off with a bound, as if they had suddenly been gifted with the wings of the wind. Now Molly Magpie, being the lighter and weaker of the two, gained upon Barebones, as they came to a little descending ground; and anon Barebones shot ahead, as they rose upon the ascent. The first two rounds continued thus alternately in favour of one or the other, the little red cap and the yellow appeared perched in the air, and the riders seemed hardly to touch the horses they rode. A dead and breathless silence held captive the crowd, and Allen and Dangerfield might be seen, each on a little eminence in the centre of the field, watching the struggle with a steady countenance, and calm determined eye. The third round Barebones decidedly took the lead: first a head, then a neck, then a whole body appeared in advance, and by the time they arrived at the goal, Barebones was computed to be ten lengths ahead of Molly Magpie. The assembled multitude shouted "Victory! Hurrah for Barebones!" and as for old Pompey, he scarcely waited for little red cap to be weighed after the heat, when he hugged him in his arms, and pronounced him an honour to his family.

The second heat was contested with equal ob-

stinacy, but not with the like result; Molly Magpie came in ahead of Barebones, and the knowing ones began to hedge. Just at the moment of starting for the third and last heat, Allen of Claremont exclaimed, in a loud voice,

"Twenty thousand more on the gray mare!"

The temptation was irresistible.

"Done!" cried Dangerfield.

"Done!" cried Allen; and at that instant the horses started to decide the fortunes of the house of Powhatan. For the whole of the three rounds you might have covered them both with a blanket, and nobody knew which had won, until the judges, after some consultation, decided in favour of Molly Magpie, by half a head. The same voices that had shouted and huzzaed for Barebones now shouted and huzzaed for Molly Magpie, such is the instability of popular applause; and it is recorded that Pompey the Great fought that day six pitched battles with certain gentlemen of colour, who belonged to the faction of the gray mare. Yet for all this he could not help saying to himself, "Eh! dem I spect so; dem rumpublican horse he no hold candle to tudder."

Dangerfield dined with the sporting club; toasted the winning horse, laughed his laugh, joked his joke, and received the compliments of many a sympathizing cavalier on the speed and bottom of Barebones, the conqueror of a hundred fields, with an air of careless self possession, that might have aspired to the honours of philosophy had the occasion been more worthy. He felt that he was a ruined man, but he was determined no one should penetrate his feelings, most especially Allen of Claremont.

"If it is inconvenient to you, colonel," said Allen.

"O, not in the least," said Dangerfield; and the debt was paid on the spot.

"Will you sell Barebones?"

"No, sir," replied the other, and abruptly turned away.

The next morning the procession which set out with such exulting anticipations, returned home downcast and dejected, with the exception of the colonel, who was determined to present a dignified front to Mrs. Dangerfield. Mr. Littlejohn, who had not uttered a single word since the loss of the race, rode carelessly on, scarcely holding his bridle, which hung loosely on his horse's mane, and now and then casting his eye with a look of commiseration on his benefactor; old Pompey did nothing but shake his fist at little Pompey; and even Barebones seemed conscious of his defeat, for he slouched along with his head depressed, and had hardly spirit to brush away the flies with his tail.

CHAPTER IV.

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband.

If we do not mistake it was Cardinal Richelieu who once boasted that he could make treason or heresy out of any three words in any language; such is the uncertainty of speech, and the ingenuity of man in misinterpreting it! One might suppose that the simple line placed at the head of this chapter could not possibly have afforded any sport to the commentators; and yet it is not so. Some of these have interpreted it as having allusion to a kingly crown, which in these troubled days is in truth little else than a crown of thorns. Others, who doubtless belonged to the ancient, if not very honourable order of old bachelors, have ignorantly presumed that the crown here meant is that piece of silver coin bearing on its face the hooked nose of Louis of France, and formerly passing current in these States at eight and tenpence, and thus attempted to degrade the dignity of the sex down to that ignoble standard. But beshrew their hearts, we say,—meaning thereby, may they marry a shrew, and repent this atrocious blasphemy, in smoky chimneys, and curtain lectures. Who that hath ever known the blessing of a modest, tender, cheerful, sensible helpmate and companion, amid the flowers of youth, the fruits of manhood, and the yellow leaves of declining age, but will recognise that the crown alluded to by the inspired writer is the crown of happiness, and not the thorny bauble for which

men wade through oceans of blood, nor the shining temptation which is so often the price of honour, integrity, and a quiet conscience.

The rumour of the defeat and discomfiture of Barebones reached Mrs. Dangerfield the evening of the day on which it happened. Nobody knew how it came, or who brought the news, for it may be said of Rumour, that, like the pestilence, she walketh in darkness with the speed of thought or anticipation, outstrips the swiftest locomotive, and leaves all human conveyances behind. We have sometimes been almost tempted to believe she possessed the spirit of prophecy, and foretold the future, rather than recorded the past.

Be this as it may, when Colonel Dangerfield, with all the coolness of desperation, apprized his wife of the loss of the race and the ruin of his fortune, she received the information without surprise or emotion. The preceding night she had given to her two children the tears and sorrows of a tender mother; this morning she gave her husband the advice and consolation of a faithful wife. She neither complained nor reproached, but looking the present calmly in the face, asked of the colonel a full and fair statement of his affairs.

"I am a ruined man," said he, firmly, "it is utterly impossible to keep up the establishment any longer."

"Well, then we must retrench, my dear."

"Retrenchment will not do; it is too late now. I would I had taken your advice in time."

"Well, never mind that now. If we cannot live in our accustomed home, we must find one elsewhere. There is plenty of room in this new

world of ours, and wherever we are together there will be our home."

"For God's sake, Cornelia, scold me a little, can't you?" exclaimed Dangerfield, quite overcome. "I have beggared you and the children, and yet you forgive me! Call me fool, idiot, madman, any thing but villain, and I shall feel somewhat relieved. Come, scold, scold, I say; curse me for destroying your happiness and that of our children."

"You have not destroyed our happiness," replied Mrs. Dangerfield; "this is the talk of custom, the folly of inexperience, which thinks it cannot exist except in one round of the same modes and enjoyments. I, sir, as you well know, passed the early part of my life in poverty, with a parent whose estate was confiscated and name dishonoured for his attachment to a worthless master. From this situation you chose me, and placed me in the lap of affluence, where every wish has been gratified. Yet I cannot but confess that, saving the enjoyments of a wife and a mother, I am not, I never was, happier than in the midst of poverty. My dear Cuthbert, this change of fortune will soon teach you how little, how very little, the blessings of life depend on mere situation. Guilt and remorse are the only lasting sources of misery."

"And am I not guilty? and will not my future life be one of bitter compunction?"

"No, not guilty, only imprudent—the imprudence of inexperience and want of thought. Do not quarrel with the lessons of experience," added she, with a smile; "you will be wiser in future."

"Yes, I shall shut the door when the steed is stolen."

"I wish, my dear, Barebones had been stolen six months ago."

"Nay, now, Cornelia, don't blame poor Barebones,—now, don't, I beg of you. Damme if he isn't the finest creature in Virginia, and I have a great mind to match him against Allen of Claremont for the next spring meeting."

"O, colonel! colonel! what's bred in the bone—but I don't abuse Barebones, and I am sure he is the best horse in Virginia; but I hope you won't match him against Molly Magpie again."

"What a fool I am!—what an egregious ass!" cried the colonel, smiting his forehead, and striding about the room.

By degrees Mrs. Dangerfield drew her husband into a detail of the state of his affairs, at least so far as he understood them. The truth is, however, he knew no more about the matter than that paragon of ignorance, "the man in the moon." He made himself out to be over head and ears in debt, and that if he turned his plantation and slaves into gold, they would not pay half of what he owed. Mrs. Dangerfield was astonished, and almost lost her self-possession. She maintained it to be impossible; the colonel insisted it was possible; and the result of the argument was a determination to send for the Scotch merchant to elucidate the matter.

The conference had scarcely ended when a horrible outcry and commotion was heard in the direction of the stables, which were at the distance of about a furlong from the house, and Mrs. Dangerfield begged the colonel to go and see what was the matter. Some husbands would have declined, merely because they consider obliging their wives as a proof of being henpecked; but the colonel was

a little crestfallen at the catastrophe of Barebones and the state of his affairs, and obeyed like a discreet person. Arriving on the premises, he beheld Pompey the Little tied incontinently to a beam, and Pompey the Great (otherwise called Pompey Ducklegs) belabouring him with a cowskin so lustily, that if ever man or boy had a good excuse for roaring like ten thousand bulls of Bashan, it was that luckless composition of ebony. Between every stroke, which was followed by a roar, the indignant Ducklegs would exclaim:—

"You young racksal—you lose he race, eh! —(whack!)—You no beat Molly Magpie, eh!—(whack!)—You no be free nigger, eh!—(whack!) —You no get hundred a year, eh!—(whack!)—You disgrace you family, you young racksal, eh! —(whack! whack! whack!)"

"Pomp," cried the colonel, "how dare you strike any of my slaves without my permission?"

"He disgrace he family, massa."

"Pshaw! untie the poor fellow; he did his best—it was not his fault that Barebones lost. Untie him, I say, and never take such a liberty again, sir."

"Huh!—libbety!" grumbled Pompey Ducklegs, as he obeyed his master, "debbil! an't he old nigger's own flesh and blood, dough he be a disgrace to he family?"

CHAPTER V.

Showing that a Gentleman will understand his affairs the better for a little Arithmetic.

Honour and praise to the illustrious Thomas Dilworth, who whilom, in the days of our flagellation, used to figure in front of Spelling Book and "Schoolmaster's Assistant" dire, with quill behind his ear, in powdered wig, and most redundant chitterling. True it is, that the march of improvement in this stupendous age of self-sharpening pencils, silver forks, antibilious pills, Franklin gridirons, artificial teeth, artificial flowers, artificial women, and other stupendous improvements, —true it is, that this illustrious man hath been elbowed from the hallowed precincts of practical and impracticable schools—we beg pardon, institutes—wherein A, B, C is taught classically, and pothooks and hangers perpetrated according to the true principles of trigonometry,—true it is, that his Spelling Book hath been superseded by millions of new and improved systems invented by ambitious pedagogues for the purpose of picking the pockets of inexperienced parents, and thus benefiting the rising generation,—that his Schoolmaster's Assistant hath given place to the same thing with a different, yea, a more high-sounding name, and that the titlepage consecrated by his powdered pate and sagacious phiz, wherein shone the might of birch, hath been usurped by the effigies of other pretenders who learned figures and

spelling of the immortal gods. "True it is, and pity 'tis 'tis true;" yet if we desert thee for these modern upstarts, O most illustrious Thomas! may we forget our multiplication table, lose the faculty of calculating compound interest on the money we lend to our dear friends, and all our practical knowledge of subtraction be preserved by the necessity of estimating the diminution of our bank stock. Those only whose knowledge of arithmetic will enable them to count the innumerable flagellations we received under the auspices of the illustrious Dilworth ere we could be brought to comprehend the virtue of a common denominator, can estimate the value of this disinterested tribute to his memory.

The summons despatched to the Scotch merchant was in due time followed by the appearance of that exceedingly methodical person, who was animated, governed, and impelled, as it were, by the five rules of arithmetic. He reasoned like a member of congress, in figures, and drew his conclusions from profit and loss. It was equally against his conscience to make a losing bargain as to take an undue advantage for the purposes of gain. Dangerfield, who had no great good-will towards him (for no man loves his creditor), used to tell a story of Mr. Mactabb, which, whether true or not, was somewhat in character. A friend, it seems, proposed to him a shipment of tobacco to Ireland, where its introduction was either prohibited or burdened with enormous duties, observing, at the same time, he doubted whether it would be quite right. Mactabb took out his pencil, and entered upon a long calculation, at the end of which he exclaimed, "Right, sir, right, by a balance of five thousand

pounds." He was, in short, a lover of money; yet, such are the strange inconsistencies of even the most consummate misers, that though they will starve themselves, they sometimes exhibit the most extraordinary traits of generosity. Like pent-up waters, it would seem, when the barrier is once broken through, they flow in a torrent. It was thus with Mactabb, who on more than one occasion had conducted himself with a delicate liberality which seemed little in accord with his general character.

"Can you tell me how much I owe you, Mr. Mactabb?" asked Colonel Dangerfield, almost afraid to hear the answer.

Mactabb took out his memorandum-book, where he had calculated the amount to a fraction. It was somewhat more than seventy-five thousand pounds, Virginia currency.

"No more?" asked the colonel, drawing his breath freely, and rubbing his hands.

Mactabb lifted his specs from before his eyes, and stared at him in astonishment.

"No more, Colonel Dangerfield! why, how much did you think it was?"

"Why, the truth is, sir, I am not good at calculations; and besides, I don't know how it is, but I either kept no account of your advances, or I have mislaid it. I thought I owed you almost twice that sum."

"Here is a phenomenon!" thought Mactabb; "the first man I ever met with who overrated his debts." After a little hesitation, the colonel addressed him again,—

"Mr. Mactabb, you have told me how much I owe you; I wish you would go a little farther, and tell me the amount of my debts to other people."

Mactabb was more astonished than ever; though he had been accustomed to dealing with Virginia planters, he never met with exactly such a one before.

"That, colonel, is out of my power unless you will show me your accounts, your day-book, journal, leger, statement of bills, notes, bonds, acceptances, purchases, &c. &c. &c."

"My what?" exclaimed the colonel, utterly confounded; "I never kept an account in my life."

"No!" exclaimed Mactabb, more astonished than the colonel; "I don't wonder—" and here he checked himself.

"Mr. Mactabb," said Colonel Dangerfield, in a husky tone, "it is useless to look back except with a view to the future. What is done, is done. I sent for you to learn the amount of your claims upon me, and to say that you are at perfect liberty to act on the deed of trust as soon as you please. I can never repay you, and the estate must be sold."

"Sold!"

"Yes—sold."

"Colonel Dangerfield," said the Scotsman, "indulge me a few moments. Is there no way of avoiding this painful sacrifice? I am a man of family myself, sir; my father has an estate in the highlands of Scotland, which, barren as it is, would break his old heart to part with. Will you—to bring the matter to a close—will you place your affairs in my hands, and await the result of my inquiries and arrangements?"

"It is the very thing I wish; for I will acknowledge myself utterly incapacitated for the task."

After gaining all the information possible from Colonel Dangerfield concerning the state of his affairs which was very little, Mactabb departed on

his errand. There is not much difficulty in finding out creditors, and in less than a month he returned with the requisite information. There were a number of considerable demands, but Mactabb was the principal creditor. Again the colonel was surprised at the result, and again was the honest Scot astonished at finding a man who did not owe half as much as he expected.

"Let us see," said Mactabb; "your estate contains—how many acres?"

"I don't know exactly, but I believe about fourteen thousand."

"And the amount of your income is—"

"I can't say how much."

"And the number of slaves—"

"Don't know—my overseer can tell."

"Perhaps we had better call him in;" and the overseer was accordingly summoned. After receiving the necessary information, and the two gentlemen being left alone, Mactabb resumed the conversation.

"Well, Colonel Dangerfield, after all, I don't see that your affairs are so desperate. A few years of saving will set all right again."

"But I don't know how to save."

"O, you will soon learn; necessity is—" and here he checked himself.

"No, I will be sincere with you, Mr. Mactabb; if I continue here I must live as I have been accustomed to live. I must accept invitations, and give them; I must have my equipages, my pack of hounds, my blood horses, and I must keep open house. No, if I cannot hold up my head as I was wont, I am determined to quit this part of the country for ever. Besides, I shall be pestered for debts I cannot pay"

"Let me be your sole creditor, and I will wait your time."

"You? why, I thought you—" and the colonel stammered and stopped.

"I know what you thought me,—a miserly old hunks, and, the Lord forgive me! so I am, I believe, sometimes: the instinct of money-getting frequently overpowers the inward man; but I assure you, colonel, I am at this moment inclined to do you a service."

"I thank you, Mactabb," replied Dangerfield, somewhat suspicious of a design; "but I fear it is out of your power. The estate must and shall be sold publicly, if no private purchaser can be found."

"It will then be sacrificed."

"I cannot help it. Perhaps you will take it off my hands, and pay yourself, with the other creditors?"

Mactabb felt the old money-getting devil tugging at his elbow, and whispering in his ear to accept the offer. For a few moments he listened to the tempter, and felt himself sorely beset by his insinuations. But he said to himself, "Get thee behind me, Satan;" and the cowardly imp obeyed.

"What say you, sir," resumed Dangerfield, with a desperate vivacity, "will you take all and pay all?"

"No, I'll be d—d if I do!" Mactabb never swore except when he was going to do a generous action.

"I thought so," observed the colonel, indignantly; "you expect to make a better bargain at a public sale."

"There you thought wrong, Colonel Dangerfield. I expect to make a better bargain in pri-

vate for you; please to attend to me. I still think that the better way would be to keep your estate, and by an inflexible course of economy—[the colonel shook his head]—well, then, to the other point; you must make the best sale you can—"

"I know nothing about bargains."

"More is the pity, Colonel Dangerfield; a man ignorant of bargaining is always at the mercy of rogues."

"And a man acquainted with it is very often a rogue himself."

"Amen—tit for tat is all fair. But to the point once more. In few words, and in all sincerity, I will take your estate."

"Hum!" quoth the colonel, dryly.

"I will pay your debts."

"Hum!" still more dryly.

"I will give you a discharge in full."

"Hum!" as dry as tinder; "and so the matter is settled at last."

"Not quite; there is one condition yet to be complied with; you must—"

"What a cursed old skinflint!" thought the colonel.

"You must bind yourself, your heirs, executors, and assigns to receive from me the just and full sum of five thousand pounds, Virginia currency, as a balance due you in the settlement of this business."

"The devil!" exclaimed the colonel, astonished.

"Do you consent, Colonel Dangerfield?"

"Are you in earnest, Mr. Mactabb?"

"I am always in earnest when I make a bargain."

"Well, then, give me your hand, sir; and damme if you are not the prince of tobacco mer-

chants. You are a right generous fellow; and I'll make you a present of Barebones."

"O, no, no, colonel, don't tempt me to lose my money on a broken-down horse."

"A broken-down horse, sir! Do you mean to insult me by insinuating that Barebones is broke down, or that I would give him to you if he was not at this moment able to beat any horse, mare, or gelding in Virginia?"

"Except Molly Magpie.

"No, sir," cried the colonel, in a rage, "not excepting Molly Magpie. I'll tell you what, Mr. Mactabb, you may be a judge of tobacco, but you know no more of a horse than old Allen of Claremont; and more than that, sir, please to understand I'm off with my agreement. You shan't have my estate; you shan't pay my debts; and damme if I accept your five thousand pounds.—Barebones broke down, indeed!"

It was with some difficulty Mactabb allayed the wrath of the colonel. "A sailor is all one as a piece of his ship," as the old song says, and a Virginian is all one as a piece of his horse. He realizes the fable of the centaurs—he will have a horse if he has nothing else; and if he cannot procure a pair of spurs, he will fasten a single one to his right heel, justly considering that if you prick one side of a horse along, the other will follow of course. Mactabb finally pacified the colonel by some adroit allusions to the exploits of Barebones, and the matter was amicably settled. The colonel consented to have his debts paid, and to receive the five thousand pounds.

"After all I have got a great bargain," said Mactabb, "if I only knew as much about the cultivation of tobacco as of its quality and value."

"And I have made a good bargain too," said the colonel, with a sigh, "if I only knew as well how to make, as I do about making away with money."

As the winter was now at hand, it was settled that Colonel Dangerfield should remain where he was until spring; and after discussing a bottle of Madeira from a vintage which I believe preceded the discovery of that island, Mactabb departed for his residence in the city of Richmond, the abode of hospitable men and bonny lasses. Here he set about arranging the affairs of Colonel Dangerfield with that indefatigable zeal which marked his character. Next to making money it was his greatest pleasure to pay it where it was honestly due, though we are obliged to confess that, on this occasion, tradition says he squeezed some of the colonel's creditors at such a horrible rate, that they did not recover their breath for a week afterwards. Among the greatest sufferers was an honest painstaking cobbler, who whilom was wont to officiate for the dingy vassals of Powhatan, from whose bill he victoriously deducted sixpence in the matter of a pair of heeltaps.

CHAPTER VI.

Westward Ho!

Colonel Dangerfield felt happier than he had been for many a day, after concluding the arrangement with Mactabb. He was relieved from the load of debt,—the heaviest load, except that of sin, that ever fell on the shoulders of mankind. Besides this, the thing was settled; and when that is the case none but the weaker minded shrink from the crisis, be it what it may. In the true spirit of conjugal confidence, the colonel sought his wife to communicate with her about the best mode of settling the affair—after it was all settled. Mrs. Dangerfield could not help smiling at this complimentary appeal: "better late than never," she thought; and kindly expressed her satisfaction that the thing was no worse.

"But we must leave this next spring, and whither shall we go?" said she.

"O, there is time enough to think of that—no use in troubling ourselves before it is necessary. The spring will soon come, Cornelia."

"Too soon," thought Mrs. Dangerfield, and he naturally sweet voice softened into the most touching pathos. "The spring will soon come, the birds in our copses will soon begin to sing, the flowers in our garden soon begin to bloom, the meadows will be green before we are aware, and —and—we must be getting ready to go somewhere."

"Well, well, don't think of it, Cornelia,"—and he came and took her hand, and squeezed it affectionately, as we are living souls!—"don't think of it, and forget what a brute I have been."

Mrs. Dangerfield—we are almost afraid to record it; it is so incredible that we are sure the reader, if he or she hath the least experience in the world, will refuse to credit the whole of this veritable history, on the score of such an outrage on probability—Mrs. Dangerfield threw her arms about his neck, kissed him, and, though she did not swear he was no brute, thought so from the bottom of her heart; and yet the man was her husband!

February now came, in this mellow clime the herald of brighter days and warmer sunshine. The little birds, that come from heaven knows where, all at once appeared, and twittered among the alders that skirted the silent rivulets, which, unseen as they were unheard, were only betrayed in their quiet course by the fresh green grass that marked their meanderings; the frogs, whose music, harsh as it is, is welcome at such a time, as the sure precursor of the genial season, piped in the ponds the violets just began to peer above the ground in pale-blue clusters; the dark-brown of the woods gradually changed to an almost imperceptible purple; the wild geese were heard gabbling their course invisible in the air, from the south to the north; and all nature, animate and inanimate, began to partake in the joyous influence of the season;—all except the family of Colonel Dangerfield, to whom the approach of spring was the signal of exile.

"What can have become of Mactabb, I wonder?" observed the colonel to his wife one mild

evening, as they sat at the window watching the quiet course of the river that flowed at a little distance; "he ought to be here before this."

"From what you have told me of Mr. Mactabb, I am inclined to think he won't come till you send for him. His visit would look as if he came to hurry us away."

"True; I had forgot that. I must write to him."

Accordingly he wrote to Mactabb to prepare all the necessary documents, and bring them as early as possible. He came in a few days, produced his own discharge and those of all the creditors, and the estate of Powhatan was consigned to him for ever. The hand of Colonel Dangerfield trembled a little as he signed his name; but that of his wife, though white and delicate as a snowdrop, was steady as the oak that defies the storm. A dead silence succeeded this painful ceremony. It was at length broken by Mactabb, who, after fumbling in his pocket some time, produced a paper which he handed to the colonel, saying,

"Here is the balance due on—plague take it, what a cough I've got—somehow I always catch cold in this confounded month of February. Here is a draft for five thousand pounds, and—and may heaven prosper you with it."

The colonel received it with a silent bow, and then another pause ensued. Again it was broken by Mactabb.

"D—n it, I will—yes, I will—I have a right, and I will," mumbled he, as it were to himself; "Colonel Dangerfield—hem—will you permit—will you forgive me if I ask what are your plans for the future?"

"Good God! that's true; we have settled nothing as yet."

"Understand me, colonel, I do not wish to hurry you, this house and this estate are yours, to remain as long as you please, the longer the better. But possibly I may aid you with my advice; I am a man of business, you know, and my experience is heartily at your service."

"There is no occasion, sir," replied Dangerfield, coldly, and rather haughtily, for this was the first time of being reminded that he was no longer in his own house.

"But there *is* occasion, my dear," said Mrs. Dangerfield, good-humouredly, "and we shall be thankful for Mr. Mactabb's advice."

"Well, then, there are two ways of retrieving our fortunes, one by industry and economy, the other by enterprise and daring; which do you prefer, Colonel Dangerfield?"

"The latter, undoubtedly. Long habits have incapacitated me for the first, but I believe, I trust, sir, I am still able to venture, to dare, and to suffer, if necessary. That course, however, I confess would be most agreeable to me, which led to a distant sphere of action. I cannot live as I and my fathers have been accustomed to live here, and my intention is to go where I am not known."

"Would you like to go to Kentucky?" asked Mactabb.

Mrs. Dangerfield started.

"What! the dark and bloody ground, as I have heard it called?"

Colonel Dangerfield considered a few moments, and seemed pleased with the suggestion of Mactabb. The Scot then informed him that he had

lately come into the possession of a large tract of what was represented to be the richest land on Kentucky River, which he had accepted in lieu of a debt. That a company, with which he had associated himself, was going to form a settlement immediately, a number of emigrants having entered into an agreement to "start" in the month of March, and rendezvous at Pittsburg, whence they were to descend the Ohio to the mouth of the Kentucky; and finally, that if he would take the direction of the adventure, the choice of as much land as he wished was at his service.

During this detail, Colonel Dangerfield exchanged glances with his wife, whose countenance, like the limpid waters of Lake George, reflected every thing that passed over it. She was thinking of the tales of murder and massacre which constitute the early history of the dark and bloody ground; the dangers, the loneliness, the privations, her husband, her offspring, and herself must suffer and endure; the toils that must be encountered ere they could reach their destined home, and the exposures that would follow before they could expect to dwell in safety under their own vine and their own fig-tree. She shuddered as she thought of the future destinies of her children, who had been bred in all the luxurious indulgence of southern habits, and whose every want, and wish, and caprice had been gratified by the willing assiduity of slaves, who never contradicted or opposed their most unreasonable desires. But in a few moments the cloud passed away.

Women, even the most delicately nurtured, and the most apprehensive in their dispositions, love adventure and excitement in their very hearts. Distant journeys enchant them, and the anticipa-

tion of novelty is irresistible. Even danger has its charms, and we have more than once seen females whose vivacity was always quickened by its approach. Travelling is much more delightful to them than to the other sex, and the prospect of change a thousand times more seductive, from its contrast with their domestic habits, and the uniformity of their occupations. The name of the Ohio, *La Belle Riviere*, sounded so charmingly, and the prospect of gliding down its smooth and glassy stream, amid endless forests, and vast solitudes of nature, came with a romantic seduction across her imagination, and lighted up her face with a willing smile of acquiescence in the proposed plan. We have been sometimes led to believe that the natives of this land of emigration inherited from their ancestors that fearless wandering disposition, which brought them to the western world, and which, operating in a region of boundless space, is, however it may be the subject of ridicule or censure, the habit, or the quality, which has made this country what it is, and will make it what it is destined to become. It is founded in the love of independence, associated with, and supported by courage and enterprise. Like the young partridge, the American is scarcely hatched, ere he sets out, with the shell still clinging to his downy wing, in search of a new region where he will no longer be a burthen to himself or others.

Assuredly the attachment to home, the ties of kindred, the chains of custom, and the habits of youth exercise a wholesome influence in softening and humanizing mankind. Yet still they ought never to be indulged at the sacrifice of the higher qualities, and more inflexible duties, of the human

race. To be a useless idler at the parental fireside, a burthen on the shoulders of kindred, or a dependant on the kindness or bounty of friends, rather than burst these ties and attachments, however amiable it may be, sinks us below, far below the level of the generous manly spirit, which scorns the indulgence of such a weakness at such a price, and dashes forth into the stormy ocean of life, trusting to himself and his Maker whether he shall sink or swim.

"What say you, Cornelia?" asked the colonel, who saw her answer in her speaking eye; "shall we accept the offer, and become the founders of a new empire?"

Mrs. Dangerfield replied in something like the choice language of a Scripture matron.

"Wheresoever thou goest, there will I go; wherever thou abidest, there will I also abide; whatever thou endurest, I will bear my portion of the chastening; thy hope shall be my hope, thy disappointment my disappointment. I am ready to go with thee, my husband, be it whither it will."

Mactabb, who had a physiognomy as rough as the outside of an oystershell, took occasion to wipe his spectacles, which had become rather dim from their proximity to his eyes. And now they proceeded to settle those little details, which however indispensable both in the ordinary and extraordinary affairs of life, are utterly unworthy the dignity of romance, which we maintain, in the very teeth of the musty bookworm critics, is the most dignified, as well as useful of all kinds of writing, if not to the reader, at least to the author. What did Dan Homer get for his immortal poems? Did he get a place at court, a pension,

or a title? or did he get his pockets filled with ready money? Verily, no,—he attained to the honour of keeping a school on a rock, and afterwards, when old and blind, was chosen king of the beggars, the only dignity he ever arrived at during his life. What did Will Shakspeare get for Othello, Macbeth, Richard, and the Midsummer Night's Dream? A benefit at the "Red Bull," or some such queer place. What did Otway get for his Venice Preserved? A crust of bread which choked him. What Milton, for one of the very noblest efforts of human genius? The price of a new suit, and liberty to stay in England without being hanged. What did Locke get for the only analysis of the human understanding which the human understanding was ever able to comprehend? Not a vice-chancellorship, mastership, or wardenship, but a sentence of expulsion from a most reverend rookery.

But to return from this digression into which we have been incontinently allured, by the glorious vision of a mighty purse of golden eagles (a species of bird now almost extinct in this hemisphere) flitting before us, and making a music to which that of Pasta and Paganini is a horrible discord.

CHAPTER VII.

Colonel Dangerfield prepares to found a new Empire.

KNOWING how egregiously the gentle and enlightened reader is an hungered after stirring adventures, bloody feats, and such like delectable ingredients, which, like Cayenne and spices, give a triumphant zest to literary entertainments, and how justly he abhorreth that dull and diabolical fiend called Common Sense, we shall not detain him from the marvellous wonders in store for him a moment longer than is necessary to record a few indispensable preliminaries.

When it was known that the estate of Powhatan, with all its live stock, two-legged and four-legged, saving and excepting Barebones, Pompey Ducklegs, Pompey the Little, and the rest of the Pompey family, young and old, amounting to some five-and-forty, had passed away from their ancient owner, there was weeping and gnashing of teeth among the inhabitants of the little village of cabins, where dwelt the slaves of Colonel Dangerfield, in the possession of all those enjoyments of which their state is susceptible. They thronged about their master and mistress, begging to be taken with them to "Old Kentuck," where they would cut down the big trees, plant corn, and kill the Indians. The colonel was affected, and Mrs. Dangerfield could not restrain her tears; but, it being now evening, she directed the inspiring banjo to be twanged by the minstrel of Powhatan,

who, strange to say, was prophetically christened by the name of Orpheus, or Apollo, for, beshrew our memory, we have forgotten which. At that irresistible signal, the light-hearted slaves, the very prototypes of children in their joys, their sorrows, their forgetfulness of the past, their indifference to the future, listened, dried their tears, and soon they were dancing "double trouble" and light Virginia reels, with a triumphant, grotesque gesticulation, a zest, an hilarity seasoned by such shouts of laughter as only the echoes of the south repeat to the listening landscapes far and wide. They seemed to be happy, and we hope they were; for it is little consolation to know, or to believe, that a mode of existence of which millions of beings partake is inevitably a state of wretchedness.

To the honour of Colonel Dangerfield it must be recorded, that though Pompey the Little did not win the race, he offered him his freedom on this occasion.

"I cannot afford to give you money," said he, "but I can give you freedom."

To the still greater honour of Pompey, he declined the offer.

"Ony don't leave me behind, massa; dat all nigger want."

When the great Ducklegs heard this, he forgave him the loss of the race, and pronounced him decidedly "an honour to he family."

"But what has become of Mr. Littlejohn all this while?" the reader may peradventure inquire.

When the colonel apprized him of the transfer of his property to Mactabb, and the intended emigration to Kentucky, he exclaimed, with uncontrollable emotion, "My G—d!" and burst into a passion of tears.

His benefactor, who had never suspected him of so much feeling before, endeavoured to comfort him, by suggesting a variety of topics of consolation. But it was all in vain; he continued to weep with a degree of convulsive agitation exceedingly painful. The long winter, which had frozen his feelings into ice, seemed to have broken up on a sudden, and the pent-up waters flowed forth scorning all restraint.

"Don't take on so, Ulysses," said the colonel; "I am not so poor but I can allow you something to live on when I am gone. Mactabb will receive you for a small allowance, and that I can spare without difficulty."

"May the thunder and lightning strike Mactabb and all his race!" cried Littlejohn, suddenly checking his emotion, or rather turning it into another channel.

"Shame, Littlejohn, shame!—what has Mr. Mactabb done that you should set the thunder and lightning at him?"

"He's got Powhatan, d—n him!"

"Well, what of that? he came by it honestly."

"I don't believe it. I don't believe it possible for one man to get the estate of another honestly. It stands to reason the Old Boy must help him, more or less!"

The colonel could not forbear a smile at this theory of Mr. Littlejohn.

"The Old Boy sometimes helps people to get rid of an estate, I believe, as well as to get one. But I'll tell you what, Ulysses, I intend to give you Barebones. I can't bear to sell him."

"Barebones, colonel!—I wouldn't have him if he carried a packsaddle of guineas; he's just fit to take a bag of corn to mill, and be hanged to him! Blame me if I believe in his pedigree."

"You don't, Mr. Littlejohn? Let me tell you, sir—confound me, sir!—let me tell you, Mr. Littlejohn,"—and the colonel spoke between his shut teeth,—"that if your pedigree were as undoubted as that of Barebones, you might hold up your head a little higher than you do. Look here, sir,"—jerking out his pocket-book,—"look here, sir,"—taking out a piece of smokedried paper,—"look here, sir,"—unfolding it,—"dam, Kitty Fisher, sir; grandam, Slow and Easy, sir; great-grandam, Singed Cat, sir; great-great-grandam, Pettitoes, sir; great-great-great-grandam—'sblood! Mr. Littlejohn, I expect the next thing you do will be to call me the son of a tinker!"

A moment after the hand of Mr. Littlejohn was clasped in his own, for he remembered that Ulysses was a dependant, and himself his benefactor.

"Well, well, colonel, I'm sure I didn't mean to affront you; but that tobacco merchant has put me so out that I hardly know what I say. I beg your pardon for undervaluing poor Barebones."

This was the first time he had ever begged the colonel's pardon, and he did it now in compliment to his misfortunes.

"Then you will take the horse?"

"No, you had better sell him; Allen of Claremont told me the other day he would give a thousand pounds for him."

"I'd rather shoot him than sell him to Allen of Claremont."

"Well, then, colonel, do what you please with him, but don't part with me. Take me with you, and I'll work for you, fight for you, die for you, or my name's not Littlejohn."

"If I thought you would be comfortable in the wilderness I should like to have you with me."

"Comfortable! I shall be happy, colonel; and I can make myself useful too. You know I am a capital shot—a true sportsman."

"Yes, I know you sometimes wander about all day, and come home half-starved, mud up to the middle, with a bag as empty as when you went forth."

If his patron had not just parted with his estate, Mr. Littlejohn would have taken this matter up warmly; but as it was, he replied, with no little appearance of mortification,

"Ah! colonel, you will have your joke. But for all this, I'll bet you I shoot the first bear—"

"Done!" said the colonel; "what is your wager?"

"Nothing," said the other; "I have nothing to lose, now I think of it, but your good-will, and that I would not willingly risk. But take me with you. I never asked any thing of you before, for you never waited for that; but now I do beg of you to take me with you, because I know I can be of use some way or other."

"You will be tired of the woods."

"No, I won't."

"You will be miserable."

"And if I am, may I be obliged to work for my bread all my days if you or any other living mortal shall know it. I will take care of the horses; if they stray into the woods I'll be bound I find them. I will watch over the children; and blame me, if a copper-coloured creature shows his face, if I don't spoil it for him in less than no time. Do let me go."

"On one condition I will. Promise me, Littlejohn, that if you get tired, you will tell me so, that I may send you back again."

"There is no use in it, colonel; but I do promise. If I should be such a rascal, I'll tell you honestly; and then—I hope the first bear I meet will hug me to death."

It was settled accordingly that he should accompany the party; and Littlejohn forthwith sought his old friend Barebones, to whom he communicated the matter, and who received the news with one of his usual significant chuckles, being doubtless ignorant that this arrangement would for ever separate them in this world.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Over the hills and far away."

THE arrangements of the company contemplated a meeting of the little band of emigrants at Philadelphia, as a portion of them were to come from the eastward; and Colonel Dangerfield accordingly took up his line of march for that beautiful city, unmindful of the dangers he was about to encounter from the non-combatant inhabitants. We pass over the farewell scene; the sincere though short-lived griefs of the vassals of Powhatan at parting with their good "massa" and kind "missee;" the thoughtless wonder of the two children; the long, last, lingering, farewell look of the parents, as they stopped the carriage for a moment on the summit of a hill, and gazed their eyes dim at the home they were destined never to visit again. It was a lovely, peaceful scene; but what is beauty, what is peace, what is every earthly enjoyment but gall and bitterness when we know that we see, and feel, and taste them for the last time!

We would willingly linger a little while to describe the abode of Colonel Dangerfield; but we have a long journey and a long story before us. Description must in future give place to action, and sentiment to adventure. We must be busy, and if we occasionally stop a moment to utter a thought or describe a scene in the course of our wayfaring, it must be brief, for the time is precious. Life is short and romances long. Happy, thrice

happy is he, and thrice three times wise, who hath time and patience to read them all!

The party gave one day to Richmond and their friends. Everybody pitied Mrs. Dangerfield, and yet, perhaps, she was quite as happy as themselves; for nothing is more common than such mistakes. Mactabb was with them all day; and that he gave them his time, which he considered the most precious of all things, was a greater proof of his friendship than even the many necessary little articles his foresight had provided for their comfort, and which he insisted on their accepting. Honest Scot! perhaps thou and I are about to part for ever; yet in this age of blustering pretence, empty affectation, commonplace cant, and unprincipled prodigality, I will not miss this opportunity of bearing my testimony to thy unpretending homely virtues, although, in honest truth, thou hadst of all men I ever saw the most unpromising face for a philanthropist. The colonel presented him with the renowned Barebones, and Mactabb promised on his word that he should never be degraded to any useful occupation.

Nothing worthy of record occurred in the journey to Philadelphia; but scarcely had Dangerfield established himself in a hotel ere Pompey Ducklegs was beleaguered by a well-meaning gentleman, who assured him that, if so pleased, he and all the Pompey family were free from that moment. The name of freedom is dear to the heart of man, most especially of the man of colour; and Pompey was sorely tempted to abandon his old master. Just then, however, a miserable, debased, poverty-stricken black man came by, and, stopping opposite the gentleman, begged his charity.

"Art thou not ashamed, being a freeman, friend, to beg in the streets? Canst thou get no work?"

"I have been a long time sick, and am too weak to work," was the reply.

"Well, then, come to my house this afternoon, friend, and I will give thee an order to the hospital."

The pauper passed on without thanking him, and he had scarcely departed when a black woman, displaying in her face and clothing all the indications of profligacy and misery, staggered past them, uttering the most disgusting and blasphemous imprecations. She was followed by a child of the same colour, crying and calling after her in a language as depraved as her own. Close in their rear marched a ferocious bewhiskered caitiff, dark as ebony, gallanted by two peace-officers; he had been guilty of robbing and almost murdering a white woman.

"Who all dese here people?" asked Pompey, in a tone of dignified disgust.

"They are free people of colour, friend; and thou canst be free likewise if thou wilt."

"No, tank you," quoth Ducklegs, and departed without ceremony to solicit his master to buy these miserable people and take them to Kentucky.

A few days sufficed to bring together and to complete the preparations of the little band of adventurers; and now they were on their way to Pittsburg, whence they were to descend the Ohio to the place of their final destination. At that time, the region beyond the great Alleghany range of mountains, the whole of the valley of the Mississippi (which centres within its vast tide the tributary waters of a thousand

streams, coming, as it were, from the opposite ends of the earth) was denominated the Back Woods. The inhabitant of the Atlantic states looked at the blue outline of these majestic hills, which are aptly called the back-bone of North America, as the extremest verge of the civilized world of the West. Beyond was all forests, wild beasts, and wild Indians, in their estimation. It was the region of danger, of adventure, and romance, and, to the timid, apprehensive mind, it loomed "that bourne from whence no traveller returns." Indeed, no one at this late period can realize the romantic, the appalling interest which accompanied the emigrants to this wild and dangerous solitude, or estimate the heroism of those who first dared to encounter its tremendous vicissitudes.

It was towards the middle of the month of March that they began to ascend the Alleghany Mountains by a slow and painful pace. They had seen them at a great distance for some days, rearing their blue heads, and carrying their waving lines from south to north, as far as the eye could reach, and it seemed to them that they formed the barriers of the world in that direction. Occasionally they encountered one of those "land carracks" called Pittsburg wagons, conducted by a strange original, who lived on the road all his life, and whom we are almost tempted to describe as a new and rare species, which in this age of canals, railroads, and steamboats, will, like the Mississippi boatmen and the mammoth, soon become extinct, and be classed among the fabulous creations of monsters. Sometimes they met a drove of swine, more numerous than the wool-clad warriors of Trapoban, so disastrous to him of the rueful countenance, and of such an original air of

wildness, such rugged coats, and such a savage grunt, that they seemed to be the representatives of the wild region from which they were emigrating. Here and there along the road were seen the relics of many a wayfaring catastrophe, —broken axletrees, wheels reft of their tire, and other mementoes of disasters dire. Nay, the very signs of the taverns savoured of an approach to new scenes and associations. The Wild Turkey, the Bald Eagle, the Wolf, and the Bear, portrayed in all the horrors of rustic ingenuity, and coloured with an utter disregard of nature and probability, gave shrewd indications that here was to be found entertainment for man and horse.

At length, descending the last ridge of the Alleghany, they were greeted with the first view of the valley of the Ohio. We would attempt to describe the vast yet beautiful features of this striking and magnificent display; but we are not on a picturesque tour, and though we delight to linger in the delicious solitudes of nature, and love to recall their recollection more vividly by describing them, yet time presses, and we must pass on to other scenes.

On arriving at Pittsburg, Colonel Dangerfield assumed the task of superintending the preparations for embarking on the Ohio. Mr. Littlejohn proffered his assistance with great alacrity, and it was highly amusing to see that professional idler all at once metamorphosed into a most provoking and inveterate busybody, with the happiest faculty in the world of delaying every thing he undertook to advance, and standing in the way of everybody he affected to assist. The colonel too was deplorably deficient in experience of the best means and modes of conducting these modern argonauts;

but, as it happened, fortune had sent him a most efficient coadjutor in the person of one of the party, who had been in Kentucky before, and, as he said, was as much at home there as a prairie-dog in his hole.

His name was Ambrose Bushfield, born in North Carolina, and one of those singular examples of native energy, inborn sagacity, and daring enterprise with which the early history of every part of the west abounds. Nurtured among the mountains of his native state, free as the air he breathed, he grew up tall and straight, and hardy as the trees of the primeval forests, where he passed most of his time in hunting and rural sports of danger and enterprise. He could neither read nor write, yet he was not ignorant or vulgar; and his feelings, by some strange freak of nature or combination of circumstances, partook of the character of gentleman in more ways than one. It was said that an early disappointment in love, or, as others affirmed, the discovery that the region he inhabited was becoming so populous that he could hear his neighbour's dog bark, drove him some years before to join his fortunes with Boone, who was then laying the foundation of what will probably some day be one of the richest and most populous empires of the world.

After encountering a series of dangers and sufferings such as nothing but reality can make credible, he was captured by the Indians, who painted him black, and devoted him to the torture. Their intention was to carry him to their village before they proceeded to the last acts of barbarity. In the mean time they amused themselves with placing him bound hand and foot on a half-wild horse they had stolen on the borders of Virginia,

and setting him adrift, like Mazeppa,* to scamper through the woods full speed, while the savages followed, yelling in horrible triumph. At every Indian village they visited he ran the gauntlet after their fashion, where hundreds of savages placed themselves in parallel rows, armed with clubs and whips, with which each one did his best to beat him to the earth before he reached the goal, where, if he arrived, he was entitled by inflexible custom to exemption from the stake. There is scarcely a possibility that this should ever happen, except by a miracle; and accordingly Bushfield, though he had the strength of a giant and the nerves of a lion, was invariably knocked down before he could gain the sanctuary of the council-house.

Arriving at their village, preparations were made for burning him; and the ceremony was about to commence, by marching the wretched victim round the village with shouts and savage yells, with a view to wear down his strength and spirit, so that they might enjoy his fears and banquet on his groans. In the course of this circuit they passed the hut of one of those renegade white men whose crimes had banished him from the society of his fellows, and who had taken refuge among the Indians. His hatred of the whites was that of a fiend; and among all the cruel enemies, whether man or beast, whom the early emigrants had to encounter, this wretched outcast was the most to be dreaded. On hearing what was going forward, he rushed out of his cabin, like a tiger from his lair, seized the victim round the waist, threw him to the ground with all

* See "Recollections," of the Reverend Timothy Flint.

the force of malignant fury, and, placing his knee upon his breast, flourished his knife in triumph.

Bushfield recognised in this ruthless recreant one of the early companions of his youth. He called him by name, told him his, and besought his good offices. The appeal was not in vain. Wretch as he was, the renegade remembered and yielded to the claims of his boyish associate. He lifted him from the ground, and the recollections of his youthful home, his early attachments; of what he had been, and what he was, so wrought upon his iron heart, that he embraced Bushfield, and wept while he promised his interposition in his favour. Such was his influence, that he finally obtained the pardon of the captive, who was permitted to accompany him to his hut. But the renegade, who knew too well the unsteady nature of the savages, and the difficulty with which they were brought to relinquish the gratification of torturing a prisoner, advised and assisted Bushfield to make his escape that very night. Accordingly he fled, and though obliged to thread a pathless forest of some hundreds of miles without compass or direction except his own sagacity, he finally reached the settlement of his old friend Boone time enough to enjoy the pleasure of avenging his sufferings, by assisting in beating a party of Indians that soon after besieged the little fort of the patriarch of Kentucky. Many years having elapsed since he left the place of his birth, he determined to pay it a visit; but finding, as he said, the country become so effeminate and corrupt that the men preferred featherbeds to dry leaves, and woollen coverlids to a sky blanket, he was now on his return to spend the remainder of his days in "Old Kentuck," which after all was

the only place for a gentleman, though to be sure it was becoming rather too thickly settled. In his person Bushfield was one of those rare specimens of men, the united product of pure air, wholesome exercise, warlike habits, and perfect freedom of body and mind. He was upwards of six feet high, perfectly straight, and without an ounce of superfluous flesh in his whole composition. There was a singular ease, one might almost call it gracefulness, in his carriage; and his dress, which consisted of a buckskin hunting-shirt, a rackoon-skin cap and leggings, was highly picturesque. There was nothing vulgar or dowdy in his appearance or address, which was that of a man who believed himself equal to his fellow-men in any circumstances or situation that called for the exercise of manly vigour or daring enterprise.

Divers were the consultations of the colonel with his trusty and efficient counsellor Bushfield on the selection of barks to float them down the Ohio, for verily there was a sufficient variety to puzzle one in the choice. Here was the Alleghany skiff, the dug-out, formed from a single tree, the piroque, the covered sled, the keel-boat, the flat-boat, and every other boat that the genius of man, left to its unlimited caprices, or inspired by the fruitful mother of invention, could contrive or bring to maturity. Among these the capacious broad-horn appeared eminently conspicuous, resembling a floating house, nearly as broad as it is long, and containing a suite of apartments for almost every animal, from sovereign man to subject cattle, sheep, horses, dogs, and ignoble swine. In its primitive simplicity it hath neither bow nor stern, larboard nor starboard; and in high spring freshets, as they are called, it is the most conve-

nient boat in the world, since if it strikes the shore with one horn, it directly wheels round with the current, and away it goes the other end foremost.

The colonel and his prime minister decided at length in favour of the broad-horn, and accordingly some of prodigious dimensions were hired, almost large enough to accommodate the manifold freight of old Noah's ark. In these were embarked most of the necessaries for forming a new settlement far in the wilderness, certain domestic animals equally indispensable, and the company of emigrants, with the exception of Colonel Dangerfield and his family, who had a smaller broad-horn provided for their especial accommodation. The colonel had purchased a quantity of plain and substantial furniture and a small collection of books, among which was a volume of laws, to aid him in the government of his woodland empire. The river being now rising, and sufficiently high for their purpose, they all embarked one fine sunshiny morning, and, launching their broad-horns on the ample tide, bade a long adieu to the haunts of civilized man, the enjoyments of civilized life.

CHAPTER IX.

"Now fare thee well, dear haunts of social men!
Long may it be ere we shall meet again.
Farewell the village church and tolling bell,
Sounding to prayers or rustic fun'ral knell;
The lively fields, where men and herds are seen
Sporting or labouring morn and eve between;
The smoke of rural hamlet curling high
Above the trees, in peaceful summer sky;
The ploughman's whistle, and the lambkin's bleat,
The tinkling music of the herd so sweet,
All, all farewell!"

The broad-horn in which Colonel Dangerfield and his family embarked on their voyage down the Ohio formed an oblong square, on which was erected a rather rude cabin, containing two rooms sufficiently tight to protect them against the ordinary vicissitudes of the weather. The captain and owner of this primitive vessel was a long-sided, weather-beaten oddity, by name Sam Hugg, who was all the way from Mad River, and always, according to his own account, "wide awake and duly sober." His assistants were two men and a lad, whose real or whose nickname was Cherub Spooney, "a smart chance of a boy any how." A large portion of the banks of the Ohio was at that time in a state of nature, yet still of nature in the prime of her beauty. The morning was mild and fair, and the young spring had now put on her robe of whispering leaves. Gigantic sycamores, the growth of ages, and the children of an unexhausted soil, lined the

way on either hand, except occasionally in some receding cove, a little prairie covered with wild flowers varied the scene. Not a living soul except themselves seemed to breathe, and move, and have a being in this region of repose; which, notwithstanding, teemed with danger and death. Within the bosom of these eternal forests roamed herds of savage beasts and savage men, who, indeed, at this moment professed to be at peace with the white man, but whose friendship could not be depended on from one hour to another. They glided along without noise and without toil, and, to judge from the listless inactivity of the boatmen, one would have set them down as the most indolent of mankind, and their occupation the least laborious and dangerous.

But perhaps no people on the face of the earth or the waters endured more hardships, encountered more severe toils, or displayed more energy and perseverence in the hour of vicissitude. Many a rude memorial along the banks of the Ohio and Mississippi to this day marks the last resting-place of some worn-out boatman, and attests that here as well as elsewhere life resembles the stream of which the descent is smooth and easy, the ascent a perpetual struggle, ending in disappointment and death.

As thus they slipped along, the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield sat watching the ever-changing, melancholy, yet delightful scene, opening at every turn of this the most beautifully serpentine of all the rivers of the west, some new vista of little wild meadows, round forest hills, or abrupt cliffs frowning over the waters. There was something in the scene before them, the anticipation of that which was to come, and

the memory of those which were past, that called up feelings of melancholy neither altogether painful, nor yet devoid of painful associations. We will not so far undervalue our readers as to suppose them incapable of realizing what these were; for who is there that has not at some time or other, in youth or manhood, been cut adrift from some long-cherished tie, some favourite spot, some dear enjoyment? and who is there that has not been reminded bitterly of the past by the very enjoyments of the present moment?

No one relished the scene and the occasion so much as Mr. Littlejohn. The quiet, the repose, the freedom from all labour and exertion came over him with a delicious enchantment, and, as he was wont afterwards to say in his old age, laid his soul upon a feather-bed. He scraped acquaintance with Captain Hugg, who charmed him with the story of the Indian who found a flint, and travelled three hundred miles to buy a gun for it; of the attack and discomfiture of the band of robbers which once occupied Mason's Cave, and plundered the boats as they passed up and down the stream; and various famous legends of this land of romance and adventure. In the evening he played the fiddle for him delightfully, while the boatman danced Virginia reels on the roof of the broad-horn, and made little Cherub Spooney sing him the song of "The Owl that died of the Whooping-cough," together with divers other harmonious ditties, which, in the quiet of the scene, and when replied to by the echoes of the frowning bluffs, were exquisitely toothsome to the ear of Mr. Littlejohn, as well as Pompey Ducklegs, who listened with his mouth wide open, after the

manner of gentlemen of colour. One of these was so congenial to his taste that he learned it by heart, and long time after used to sing it for Miss Virginia Dangerfield. It ran as follows, and we believe hath never before been stereotyped.

"Our wives we kiss'd, we journeyed west,
Over the mountains blue,
For there we were told there was land to be sold,
The like you never knew.
Over the Alleghany, over the Alleghany,
Our horses are good, we've an excellent road
Over the Alleghany.

And we bought us a boat, and set her afloat,
And down the river we glided,
And on every hand we saw excellent land,
Where none but the Ingens resided.
All on the Ohio, boys,
When the wind is ahead there's no more to be said,
All on the Ohio, boys.

Our neat little bark beats every ark
That lives on the Ohio, boys;
And along as you float you may shoot from the boat
Just what kind of game you please, boys;
For there it's no treat to have plenty to eat,
There's food on every tree, boys,
All on the Ohio, boys,
All on the Ohio, boys,
When the wind's ahead there's no more to be said,
We must off with our coats and row, boys."

It is affirmed that this ditty is in its primitive exuberance nearly as long as the Ohio, and that the boatmen, instead of measuring distances by their pipes, like the ancient Dutchmen of the Manhadoes, as fame reports; or as the Mussulmans do by hours, did always calculate the number of miles by the number of its verses. But the foregoing were all that the chanting Cherub Spooney could be prevailed upon to sing, or perhaps all he knew, notwithstanding Captain Sam Hugg threat-

ened to "drive him like a flash of lightning through a gooseberry-bush" for his refusal.

"I'll be choked with a saw-log if I do," replied Spooney; and Captain Hugg justly considering that

> The man who sings against his will
> Had better keep his whistle still,—

refrained from putting his threat into execution, observing,

"Very well, old fellow; see if I don't row you up Salt River before you are many days older."

Late in the still, starry night, as the captain and one Zephi Teal, his first officer, sat watching the course of the broad-horn while she glided along, by the bright beams of a full-moon, the former observed that the river was rising rapidly, and the force of the current increasing.

"There has been a mighty grist of rain lately up above, and the snows on the mountains must have all melted in a hurry. I reckon we shall have a powerful freshet, Zephi."

"Yes," said Zephi; "it's above high-water mark already, and rises like the water in a boiling pot. I never seen it so high but once afore, and that was when Orson Upson's broad-horn was carried clean over the tops of the Button Woods, and Divine Goodyear's house floated all the way down to the Big Bend, with the family in it."

"Whew—w—w!" whistled Captain Hugg; "in what year of our Lord was that, Zeph?"

"Why, the year you got such a licking from the Yankee pedlar at Pittsburg, I calculate."

"I'll be shot," exclaimed Hugg, "if any Yankee pedlar that ever stepped 'twixt here and the other side of the end of the yearth ever treed Sam Hugg.

It's a lie, whoever said it. But did you, in good earnest, see Divine Goodyear's house floating down stream, with the family in it?"

"If I didn't may I be rowed up Salt River."

"I should like to have seen the old sinner; I dare say he prayed like a horse."

"Yes, that he did. I heard him snortin 'Now I lay me down to sleep,' as he went past the cove where I had tied my boat to the top of a big tree a hundred foot high."

Thus they communed together till the first blush of the morning appeared in the east, and the gradual opening of the scene showed the swelling stream rolling down in boiling eddies, and its dark-brown surface strewed with the spoils of the earth. The gigantic trees on the bottoms, as they are called in the language of the west, stood midway quivering in the waters, with nothing but the branches visible. The first and second banks of the river had disappeared, and wherever the hills receded from the shore the waters rolled over the earth, sweeping along with them every loose thing on its surface. The picture of the deluge was renewed; for the solid ground was no longer a place of safety, and the scene was as solitary as that which the world exhibited when all that remained of its living myriads was sheltered in Noah's ark, floating about at the mercy of a shoreless ocean that tumbled round the ball.

The accelerated course of the current, and the eddies and whirlpools occasioned by the force of the pent-up or embarrassed waters, rendered the broad-horns somewhat unmanageable; and then was exhibited the hardy character, the indomitable energy, the reckless courage of that singular

race, which the introduction of the steamboat on the western waters has almost rendered, like the mammoth, traditionary. The labour and the skill required in the management of these unwieldy masses, the ever-watchful and intense attention necessary to keep them from driving out of the strait current of the river into the drowned woods, and suffering shipwreck, cannot be conceived by any person who has not witnessed such a crisis as that we are attempting to sketch with feeble effort. It made Mr. Littlejohn perspire to look at them, and for ever quelled a latent inclination he had recently cherished to become the redoubtable owner and commander of a broad-horn on the beautiful Ohio.

There is something excitingly sublime in the exhibition of the great phenomena of nature; the littleness of man derives a self-importance from the consciousness of some remote affinity to the great Being who wields the waters in the palms of his hands, whose nod makes the solid earth to tremble like the aspen-leaf, whose voice is heard in the silent sublimity of speechless nature, and whose will is the soul of the universe. Colonel Dangerfield and his wife sat silently contemplating the scene, with the hands of little Virginia and her brother Leonard locked in their own. There was not room for such a selfish thing as fear, though the turbulent force of the waters and the critical situation of the boats might seem to warrant the most piercing apprehension. But the sentiment was awe, not fear; and the deportment of the elder was marked by a sublime self-possession, while that of the young pair exhibited silent wonder. They looked up in the faces of their parents, and there saw nothing to excite their apprehensions.

It was while hurrying down the river in this manner that they passed the first village they had seen since leaving Pittsburg. It was situated at the junction of another large river with the Ohio, and on a plain about forty feet above the level of the ordinary tide. It was now standing in the midst of a waste of waters, the upper stories and chimneys of the houses alone visible. Boats appeared passing and repassing from the higher grounds, which as yet had escaped the inundation, to the drowned village, rescuing women and children from their perilous situation, whose cries were lost in the uproar of the mighty waters, or bearing away some of the most valuable or accessible of their furniture. Sometimes, by taking advantage of the eddying whirlpools, they succeeded in the attempt, and returned in safety; but, at others, the sweeping current would take and whirl them away down the river with irresistible force.

"Cannot we assist them, captain?" asked Colonel Dangerfield.

'No, colonel; no stopping now for trifles. We must make a straight wake behind us; for if the horn gets broadside to the current, I wouldn't risk a huckleberry to a persimmon that we don't every soul get treed, and sink to the bottom like gone suckers."

A large portion of this metaphorical speech was incomprehensible to the colonel, as it will be probably to a majority of our readers. But we trust our work will not be the worse for a little mystification of language, seeing we deal in no other obscurities.

On the evening of the sixth day the voyagers found a harbour in a deep indenture of the river, where they came to, under the brow of a hill which

in common times was some distance inland. Here they met a number of boats from various parts of the great Valley of the Mississippi, which had taken shelter from the increasing fury of the inundation, and were waiting till it subsided a little. A merrier set of rogues never congregated together, nor is it possible to describe the medley of characters and amusements exhibited in this out-of-the-way corner of the earth. Fiddling and dancing, gambling and tippling, contests of wit and contests of activity, strength, and bottom; trials of skill in shooting at a mark, and every wild and wayward eccentricity which animal spirits, freed from all restraint of fashion, custom, or prescription, could devise, were all displayed here with a degree of rank primitive luxuriance, such as the same race of man never exhibits but once in the course of its progress from the infancy of society to the period of final corruption and decay. They seemed to think that custom was often little better than a reverend error, or, at all events, that new situations authorized new modes of enjoyment.

In some boats were pigs, sheep, bacon, flour, &c., for New Orleans; in others cargoes of two legged live stock, going to settle at Bois Brulé, or Bob Ruly as they called it; in others boards and plank; in others cider and whiskey; in others Yankee notions of all kinds. Each had a pole sticking up, on which, instead of a sign, he had suspended a sample of his wares, provided they were amenable to such a display, and a complete fair was carried on for the time they remained together. Most of the boats had a fiddle on board, for these people delight in dancing and music; and in one of them was the Rev-

erend Lazarus Snortgrace, whose voice, as he exhorted these frolicksome sinners to repentance, towered above the uproar of obstreperous merriment which echoed through these vast solitudes. He called himself one of the ram's horns which blew down the walls of Jericho, and not without special reason, for his lungs were of leather, and his breath inexhaustible. But the greatest curiosity of this miscellaneous assemblage was a wight from New-England, whose boat contained a complete establishment for the shoeing of horses in all its branches. He was on a trading voyage as far down as New Orleans, and good luck befriend him say we, for the originality of his enterprise merits not only fortune but immortality.

After waiting here a few days, the waters having sufficiently spent their force to render the navigation safe, the cavalcade of boats prepared to depart on their several ways. Some for the east, some for the west, some for the north, and some for the south. They belonged many of them to places thousands of miles apart; they had met here by accident, and the chances were a hundred to one that they would never meet again. At the signal of the blowing of the trumpets, which echoed among the recesses of the hills, they set forth, and soon were floating down towards the junction of the Ohio and the Mississippi. These trumpets at the time we speak of were of wood, and the tones might be mistaken for those of a French horn, so soft, so mellow in the distance, that we have sometimes been wrought almost to shed tears, at hearing them vibrating of a summer evening among the hills. They are used not only as signals, but for the purpose of ascertaining the position of the boats in those

dense fogs, which at certain seasons are so impenetrable, that Captain Sam Hugg swore a most original and humorous oath, that he had turned the edge of a razor in attempting to cut through one of them. True it is, as he affirmed "It was a bloody Yankee razor, and not to be wondered at." The sound is echoed from the bank of the river, and the time which elapses indicates to these shrewd observers the distance from shore. Thus Echo, in addition to her other attributes, may justly claim the appellation of the Goddess of the Mississippi Navigators.

At the point of junction between the Ohio and Kentucky rivers, the fleet of boats separated; the colonel and his party proceeding up the latter to their destined home, and the others down the former stream, the Lord knows where. And now began the severe toils of the boatmen. The stream was rapid, and the difficulties of ascent insurmountable to all human skill and perseverance save that of a Kentucky boatman, who everybody knows is amphibious, "half horse, half alligator." They placed their shoulders against the long poles, one end of which was loaded with iron, and making what was called a "reverend set," walked steadily to the stern of the broad-horn, propelling her forward at the same time. Sometimes this course was impracticable from the depth or rapidity of the current, and then came the tug of war. A rope was taken ashore, and fastened to a rock, or stump, or sapling, and by this the boat was dragged along. This process is called cordelleing, and it is inexpressibly slow, tedious, and laborious. More than once they came to a place, where, owing to a sudden angle of the river, or the projecting of some obstacle from the shore, they met

a current of such irresistible force as to wheel them entirely round, and send them down the stream several hundred yards.

Nothing could surpass the sad solitude of their voyage. The river pursued its course for the most part through a channel worn out of the limestone rock, perpendicular on either side, and so deep that except at midday the sun never shone on the dark waters. The gloom was increased by vast trees growing on the summit of the rocks, and whose branches overshadowed the abyss. Emerging at length from this twilight cavern, they came to a spot where the strata of rocks disappeared, and a paradise of nature opened to their view. It was an open forest of gigantic trees, occupying a rich level which extended a considerable distance on the river. No underwood grew upon these shady meadows, and the whole was one carpet of blossoms opening to the spring air.

"Here is the spot," said Bushfield, and so it was, as the colonel found on looking at his map and survey.

"I'm glad on't," quoth Captain Hugg, "for I'll be shot by an Ingen, if this isn't worse than cordelleing round the old sycamore."

The turn of the river had made a harbour for boats, and here they came to, landed their cargoes, and without delaying a moment, proceeded under the direction of Bushfield to erect tents and other temporary shelters for the party. The day was spent at these occupations, in which the boatmen willingly assisted, and in which Mr. Littlejohn distinguished himself by being particularly in the way, or, as Captain Sam said, "By always rowing up stream instead of down."

"Well, colonel," said that worthy, the next morning, "you're all comfortably settled now, and I think I'll let go the willows, and make tracks for Bob Ruly, where I belong; so good-by to you, and may you never want plenty of deer, wild turkeys, and whiskey."

The colonel paid his fare, and gave him a liberal present besides, whereat the captain was so exalted, that he swore there was no backing out in him, "he was a real screamer of a feller."

The amphibious men now departed, and floating down the stream to the music of Cherub Spooney's favourite air of "The Owl that died of the Whooping-cough," disappeared in a turn of the river. As the echoes of their wooden trumpet gradually died away, our travellers felt that the last link which bound them to the distant world was severed.

CHAPTER X.

"Now the log hut, erst haunt of sturdy men,
Degenerate lot! becomes the porker's pen;
While stately houses rise on every side,
The good man's comfort, and the good dame's pride;
To cultivated fields the forest chang'd,
And where the wild beasts, now the tame ones rang'd;
The curling smoke amid the woods was seen;
The village church now whiten'd on the green,
And by its side arose the little school,
Where rod and reason lusty urchins rule,
Whose loud-repeated lessons might be heard,
Whene'er along the road a wight appear'd."

Our intention is not to detail the particulars of that struggle which, in these rugged regions of nature's empire, ever takes place between the patient industry of man and her wild luxuriance; nor to trace the progress of a new settlement, from the first wound given to the primeval forest, to the golden harvest-field; from the rude log-cabin, to the stately double house, and all its ambitious accompaniments; which change, in the figurative style of the west, is yclept "throwing off the moccasins." Suffice it to say, that the traveller who some ten years after the sound of the first axe was heard in these woods chanced to visit it, would have been charmed with the little settlement of Colonel Dangerfield, its rural beauties, and its air of rustic opulence. The smoke rising above the tall trees, the barking of dogs, the crowing of cocks, the tinkling of bells, the strokes of the woodman's axe, the crash of the falling tree, and

the long echoes of the hunter's gun would announce to him that he was coming to the abodes of civilized men. He would behold a village rising in the midst of crystal springs, bursting from the sides of little knolls, or from under hoary rocks; fields of grain springing up with a luxuriance that returned to the labourer a hundredfold, enclosed by log fences, and bristling with girdled trees towering to the skies. Orchards loaded with fruits, gardens full of vegetables and flowers, would next greet him on the spot which a few years before was the abode of the buffalo and wild deer, the hunting-ground of the Indian; and he might say to himself, "What are all the temporary privations and sufferings of a few short years in the wilderness, ending in rural happiness like this, compared to debts and poverty, degradation and dependence? The enterprising emigrant who comes hither with a few hundred dollars, or perhaps with nothing but a strong arm and a strong heart, soon gains independence for himself and his children. In the crowded haunts of men his genius has no room to exert itself; he is elbowed aside by those who are on the march before him, or who have already gained possession of advantages of which he cannot partake. But here he has elbow-room, and here it is that spirit and enterprise find their appropriate world."

Such, or something like them, were in reality the reflections of a traveller who, one fine spring afternoon, when the twilight was lending its mellow lustre to the smiling landscape, rode into the town of Dangerfieldville, a formidable name assuredly; but the colonel had followed the fashion of the west, where, if a man has a name as long as that of Aldibirontiphoskiphornio, it goes hard

but he will tack a *ville* to its tail when he lays the foundation of a city which is to become the great mart of the western world. The young man bestrode a blooded horse, which is indispensable in Kentucky to the character of a gentleman, and which horse carried a portmanteau seemingly well filled with "plunder," on which was strapped a brown camlet cloak with a purple velvet cape,—we like to be particular in these matters, in imitation of our betters,—and which brown camlet cloak with a purple velvet cape was surmounted by a blue, or perhaps it might have been a green, silk umbrella, on which was written in black ink the name of Dudley Rainsford, which we will venture to suggest might peradventure have been that of the traveller himself. He wore a gray frock, with covered buttons, and buttoned with a single button, the fourth from the bottom; a single-breasted vest of buff Marseilles, with two pockets, probably to carry his money in; a pair of white drilling pantaloons, with a spot of ink on the left leg, a little below the knee; and a pair of boots, the toes of which were as wide as a broad-horn, and which, to the best of our knowledge and belief, were right and left.

His horse, which seemed almost worn out with the day's journey, was an iron-gray, about fifteen hands high, with a star of five points in his forehead, three black feet, and one white one, which, if we mistake not, make four. He had two ears, one on the right, the other on the left side of his head; a pair of nostrils, one close by the other, and looking for all the world like twins; a white mane hanging on the right side of his neck; and two eyes, which looked exactly as if he could see out of them. Just below his right ear was a spot

of hair rather inclining to white, which might or might not be occasioned by some unaccountable cause; and, from his slavering a little at the mouth, it might be predicated of him that he had been eating too heartily of red clover. He was guided by a snaffle-bridle with a plated bit, neither very new nor very old; and his saddle was wrought of the skin of a pig. We hope the reader will not be out of patience with this particular inventory of goods, chattels, accoutrements, &c. &c. &c. This traveller is destined to be the hero of our tale; and he must be but an illiterate person who doth not know the fashion of the times requires that a hero should be delineated with the same minute particularity with which we describe a stolen horse, an absconding swindler, or a runaway negro in an advertisement.

Mr. Rainsford was slowly passing a large mansion, with a piazza from one end to the other, and bearing marks of opulence as well as taste, when he was accosted by a voice as follows, in a tone of good-humoured banter,—

"Hullo! I say, stranger, did you ever happen to see a snail in your travels?"

'I rather suspect I have," replied the stranger, stopping his tired horse; "what then?"

"Why, then, I reckon you must have met him; for you never could have overtook him at that rate, any how."

The stranger again pricked his horse into a walk, when the man of the long piazza called out,—

"Hullo! stranger, you're barking up the wrong tree; what business have you to pass this house?"

"What's that to you?" replied Mr. Rainsford, rather in a huff at being so unceremoniously in-

terrogated, and presuming this was some importunate innkeeper who wanted his custom.

"I'll tell you directly, stranger; but, first and foremost, let me ask if you ant rather fresh in these parts; for I can see with half an eye you don't understand trap."

"Trap! I won't be trapped by you, I promise you."

"You won't, eh?—we'll see that directly, I reckon. Colonel," said he, calling to some one within, "colonel, I believe here's an unaccountable sort of character, for he seems afraid to stop at a gentleman's house when invited in a civil way. Come out, and put the grace of our Lord upon him, for you know you're a justice of peace."

This address was followed by the appearance of a gentleman rather beyond the middle age, whom we shall not describe, because we hope the reader will recognise him at the first glance as his old acquaintance, Colonel Dangerfield. He accosted the traveller politely, and apologized for the detention of his friend Bushfield.

"I believe you don't know the custom of this village,—I may say of the whole country. No traveller passes this or any other house without stopping, unless he can give a good and sufficient reason for such a gross piece of neglect."

"I wish to find an inn, sir; can you direct me to one?"

"Whew!" cried Bushfield; "an inn!—why, every house is an inn here, except that the landlord don't charge any thing to his customers. I say, stranger, where did you come from, that you expect to find taverns here in Old Kentuck?"

"You will alight, and spend the night here, sir, if you please," said Colonel Dangerfield; "I shall

be proud to receive you, and you will find no public-house within a hundred miles of this in the direction you are going."

"My good sir, I cannot think of imposing on your hospitality. I was recommended here as to a place where I could purchase a good tract of land at a reasonable price; for I design to settle in this country if I can be suited, and was looking out for an inn when this gentleman accosted me."

"Another new settler!" grumbled Bushfield; "the country will soon be as full of people as a prairie is of wolves; there'll be no such thing as turning round in it without hitting some feller's elbow. I must cut dirt soon for some place where there's more room."

The colonel repeated his invitation with such a frank cordiality, that the stranger at length, on being satisfied that there was no place of public entertainment in the village, accepted it, and, alighting from his horse, was ushered into a large room plainly yet comfortably furnished, and occupied by several persons of both sexes.

"A stranger," said Colonel Dangerfield.

"My name is Rainsford."

"O, never mind, sir; the name of stranger is enough for us."

"Why, where was this genius raised?" said Bushfield to himself; "a wild turkey would know better. Whenever a man goes to tell me his name when he enters my house, I calculate he thinks I suspect him of being a horse-stealer."

The company rose when the stranger was introduced, and the colonel presented him to his wife, who was still a comely and genteel matron, for the feeling of good breeding is independent of the mere forms of fashion; to his son Leonard,

now a tall, straight, noble-looking youth; and to his daughter Virginia, now grown to the full size of graceful womanhood; not forgetting also Mr. Ulysses Littlejohn, who on the entrance of Rainsford had risen from three chairs, on one of which he sat, on another reclined his arm, and on the third supported his left leg, after the fashion of Old Virginia, the mother of presidents, and the parent of a mighty state.

"And so," said Colonel Dangerfield, after a few preliminary compliments, "you are looking for a settlement somewhere in this part of the country?"

"I came with an intention of residing in it, certainly; but I fear I am not qualified for a farmer."

"Can you cut down a tree as big round as all out doors in less time than you can look at it?" asked Bushfield.

"I fear not," said the other, smiling; "I never attempted to handle an axe but once that I recollect, and then I almost cut off my toe."

"Ah! you won't do here, unless maybe you can trail a deer, and shoot a bear in a cane-brake so thick that a mustard-seed shot couldn't find the way through it without grazing the bark."

"I can do neither of these things; but perhaps I can learn."

"Learn! you are too old for that, stranger. A man must begin with the eggshell on him, as the partridges learn to run, and get up before daylight many a year in and year out, before he can get to be worth much—I mean in the way of living in these parts."

"I have not been accustomed to such enterprises, nor can I perform such feats," said the young traveller.

"Then what in the name of old Daniel Boone

brought you here, stranger?" said Bushfield, bluntly.

"I scarcely know myself," said the stranger; and Virginia, who happened to be looking at him at the moment, saw a cloud pass over his face, and detected a long-drawn sigh.

Tea was now brought in as a treat to the stranger, and the conversation took another turn.

CHAPTER XI.

A short Retrospect.

NINE years—the number of the Muses, and doubtless for that reason selected by Horace as the period during which every discreet author ought to keep his piece in reserve before he ventures to give it to the world,—a precept to which we ourselves have paid particular attention in respect to this work,—nine years had elapsed since Colonel Dangerfield had first pitched his tent in the wilderness. In that time, such is the magic of industry and enterprise directed by the arts of civilized life, a complete change had been in rapid progress, from the wild luxuriance of nature to the rich redundant blessings of cultivated fields and comfortable abodes, the plainness of whose outsides was gloriously contrasted by the liberal hospitality within. The first year of his arrival he was only the lord of a wilderness, the possession of which was disputed equally by the wild animals and the red men who hunted them. By degrees, however, the former had become more rare, and the latter had receded before the irresistible influence of the "wise white man," who, wheresoever he goes, to whatever region of the earth, whether east or west, north or south, carries with him his destiny, which is to civilize the world, and rule it afterwards.

While the grain was growing luxuriantly in the fields, and the flowers beginning to bloom in

the garden of Colonel Dangerfield, another and a fairer flower was expanding into rich maturity within his walls. Little Virginia was now a tall girl, straight as one of the high trees of the western forests, though not quite so lofty, and graceful as an Indian maid. She had never seen a superior, nor ever felt the miserable consciousness of inferiority, which is the parent of that affectation which destroys all grace of motion and action, and takes away the dignity of self-possession. A person conscious of equality with all around will seldom, if ever, be awkward, embarrassed, or ungraceful.

Virginia was the only daughter of the patron, the head of the settlement, and by far the most wealthy man within a circuit of a hundred miles. The vast tract of land, for which he had given a few shillings an acre, had increased in value almost a hundredfold, and the owner of Powhatan was now the proprietor of half a dozen townships. There was something, too, in the character and services of Colonel Dangerfield which, independently of his wealth, drew on him the regard and respect of the settlers in this region. He had been their leader in more than one of those Indian wars which preceded the last expiring efforts of the kings of the woods, and which gave to the now fertile fields of Kentucky the poetical name of "the dark and bloody ground." Under the tuition of Bushfield, who still lived, notwithstanding his hair-breadth escapes if we had leisure to record them would baffle all the creations of the wildest fancy, he had become an expert and enterprising woodland warrior; and the former indolence of his character had been strengthened and invigorated by the presence of eternal dangers, as

well as the necessity of perpetual exertion. Yet still, with all these claims to distinction, which were acknowledged with gratitude, there was in almost every respect a perfect equality in social intercourse between the different members of the little community. Any airs of superiority on the part of the colonel and his family would have been met by a prompt denial of their claims; for they had shared dangers, privations, and sufferings together, and these vicissitudes had made all equal. There was no distinction but that of the honest man and the rogue, the brave man and the coward. In no situation, indeed, do we feel the necessity of that union of honest men, which is the *beau ideal* of the social system, so much as in one of these parent settlements, which the arm of justice and the restraints of the laws have not yet been able to reach.

Such a state of existence at once entails the necessity of an association among the honest portion of the community for the defence of their rights and the punishment of aggressors. Hence originated the institution called the *Regulators*, formerly common on the remote frontiers, where the influence of the general government was not felt, and where there were as yet no local authorities. These were a body of the principal settlers, who combined for the purposes of self-defence, and who became of necessity both the judges and the executors of the forest laws. Horse-stealing was the great crime in those days, and when an occurrence of this kind took place the Regulators set out in pursuit; and prompt and severe was the punishment inflicted on the culprit. These associations, so indispensable in a region without laws or magistrates, have been distorted by igno-

rant, or prejudiced, or malicious writers into bands of desperate outlaws, congregated for the purpose of levying *black-mail*, committing the most wanton outrages, and violating in fact all those rights which it was the first and only object to defend. Without doubt, these conservators of the peace and property of the honest and industrious sometimes exceeded the measure of justice, as it might have been safely administered in a regularly organized community; but it is obvious that, without some such association, the first pioneers of civilization might have become impracticable and dangerous outlaws; and it is equally obvious that where neither jails, nor guardhouses, nor any of the means of securing criminals exist, punishments must be prompt as well as corporeal. But we have been diverted from the course of our story by a wish to give a simple explanation of what has been so entirely misrepresented.

The daughter of Colonel Dangerfield had been brought up among the surrounding villagers on the principle of perfect equality, in so far as to recognise their equal claim to an exchange of all the courtesies of social intercourse; and let it be recollected they were not ignorant people, for it is not the vulgar of our country that seek their fortunes in the west. It is the men of long reaching views; those who have sagacity to perceive, talent to win the advantages which such a course presents, and fortitude to incur the sacrifices necessary to obtain them. There were among this little band of adventurers men from New-England, Virginia, and elsewhere, who had been educated at colleges, and carried diplomas with them into the wilderness; and there were women, who, if not accomplished in

the arts of music, painting, or dancing, were of as cultivated minds, as delicate apprehensions, as pure morals and habits, as ever figured in courtly drawing-rooms, or saw themselves in full-length mirrors. It is true that the vicissitudes of a new and original course of existence, the trials, hardships, and dangers of succeeding generations, and the plenty of elbow-room enjoyed by the descendants of these emigrants, have somewhat changed the characters of the men, but they have produced a race which, take them all in all, with all their faults and eccentricities, as physical and intellectual beings, we do verily believe, are not to be surpassed by any that ever existed. There is, however, a wild originality, a wayward humour, a blunt sincerity, a plain-spoken freedom, and an independence of thought as well as action, which we have seen produce most ludicrous effects upon a delicate apprehensive dandy, or a self-sufficient gentleman conscious of his individual importance. In short, they are the last men in the world to bow to authority or prescription, in literature, taste, dress, or philosophy; and will just as readily demur to the despotism of their tailor as to the system of the universe.

But the women of the west, particularly of Old Kentucky! How shall we describe them, and most especially our heroine, the tall, graceful, mild, tender, independent, high-spirited, Virginia Dangerfield? They are to those of our Atlantic cities, what the wild deer is to the lamb; both gentle, charming, graceful, and of a most delicate relish; yet one possessing a character of peculiar wildness, and exhibiting a certain air of careless grace, the product of freedom from restraint; the other, sweet to the eye and to the imagination

too, yet not quite so piquant, not quite so—so—what shall we say, so exquisitely compounded as to distinguish the peculiar charms of both without doing injustice to either?—not quite so much of the venison flavour. The free enjoyment of the air, and of exercise on horseback more especially, to which the women of the west were at that time so constantly accustomed, seems to produce similar effects with the discipline of the boarding school and the drawing-room. The result of each is a graceful deportment; but the first is most graceful, because it is unstudied and free from affectation or mannerism.

Virginia grew up in the pure air and amid the pure springs of a Kentucky paradise, which every true Kentuckian will swear beats every other paradise that exists, or ever did exist, in this mundane terrene. Her eyes were those of a half-tamed fawn, tender and apprehensive, spirited, yet expressing the most perfect gentleness of character. Her skin was as transparent as the fountains of pure water out of which she drank, and though the general hue of her face was pale, it was delightful to see how the blood ran on errands from her heart to her face, when agitated by a sudden impulse.

The state of the country at the time, and the disinclination of Mrs. Dangerfield to part with her only daughter, had prevented Virginia from acquiring any of the usual accomplishments of young women of her expectations in life; but her mind was as far from being uncultivated as her manners were from being rustic. We have said that Mrs. Dangerfield was an accomplished woman, by which we meant, of a cultivated mind and graceful manners. Music, dancing, and other

accomplishments now so common, were in the days of her youth not accessible to the ladies of the United States, especially those who resided in the country. But still the attainment of all the truly ladylike embellishments, those which radically influence the mind and manners, were within reach of the wealthy. Mrs. Dangerfield had availed herself of these, and was in all respects what we, old fashioned as we are, should call a perfectly well-bred woman.

Her example, for ever before Virginia, could not fail of being all powerful in the formation of her manners, for what magic is like that of the influence of a kind, attentive, sensible, persevering mother, over the early youth of her children. She is the watchful sentinel whose vigilance never sleeps, never relaxes for a single moment. She sees the enemy approaching in ambush afar off, and sounds the alarum to each intruding emissary of mischief. The latent fault, the budding passion, the early wilfulness, the first transgression in morals or in manners, is instantly checked by the sleepless monitor; and well and truly may it be said, that not more surely does the child draw its first nourishment from the bosom of its mother, than it receives its first bias of good or evil from her early precepts and example.

Bred up in this sequestered spot, at a distance from the great whirlpool of life, Virginia knew little of the world except that little portion around her, and what the occasional perusal of a few books afforded. She read little, but thought much, and there is no doubt but that habitual reflection is a richer fountain for the mind than books, and contributes far more to its strength and originality. Without intimate associates of her own age and

sphere, she passed much of her time alone, and solitude is the nurse of the imagination. Her spirits were naturally lively, yet there were intervals when they subsided into quiet repose, or sunk into a temporary abstraction, during which her fancy expatiated in a world of its own creation.

Leonard Dangerfield was two years older than his sister, and a thrifty young sapling with a little of the outside bark on. He had been sent to one of the new colleges, which had lately sprung up among the girdled trees, yclept cities; had taken a degree, and was held in the village of Dangerfieldville to be a whole team of a young fellow, who could handle a rifle, make a speech, or tree a rackoon with any he man that ever breathed in all out of doors.

Master Ulysses Littlejohn still continued his old system of killing time, but complained sorely that he had now nobody to assist him, the colonel being too much occupied in his private and public duties to bear him company. On his first coming to the wilderness he had signalized himself greatly, as he said, by shooting a buffalo, and had lived upon the glory of this achievement ever since. But there were some doubts as to the accuracy of his report, for when Old Pompey went to the spot described by Ulysses to bring home the game, it had disappeared in a miraculous manner. The sage Ducklegs hereupon disbelieved the whole story, and many were the innuendoes he afterwards threw out on the subject of buffaloes running away after they had been shot stone dead, all of which were received by Master Littlejohn with marked disapprobation.

"Ducklegs," would he say, "you don't know a B from a buffalo's foot."

"Ah, may be so, Massa Leetlejohn; but old nigger know buffalo from no buffalo for all dat."

Having renewed the reader's acquaintance with the principal personages, we shall now jog on with our story.

CHAPTER XII.

Chit chat, and all that.

THE conversation at the tea-table, around which the whole company were seated in a sociable old-fashioned style, turned on the project of Rainsford forming a settlement in the township bordering on the domains of Colonel Dangerfield. That gentleman gave him the benefit of his experience and advice on the subject, and Littlejohn enjoined him forthwith to lay the foundation of a great city, just at the junction of two streams, both of which might be made navigable by act of congress. But the stranger, though he professed an intention to establish a colony, seemed so indifferent about the means, that Bushfield began to suspect he was "playing 'possum," that is to say enacting the hypocrite, for some purpose or other he could not fathom.

Colonel Dangerfield also thought it somewhat singular that a man should travel all the way from the seacoast to settle new lands, and be so indifferent about it. He threw a penetrating glance at the young man, but it was met by a countenance so interesting, so full of melancholy depression, that he felt his heart yearn towards him, and every trace of suspicion vanish from his mind. It was a countenance that seemed familiar with sorrows and suffering, full of anxiety, apprehension, almost despair. There was something in his voice, too, expressive of hopeless despond-

ency, and, when he spoke, it was as though he little cared whether to speak or be silent.

"You are fatigued," said the colonel, "and don't seem quite well; had you not better retire, Mr. Rainsford?"

"O, not at all, sir; if you permit me, I will remain till your usual hour. Though I have rode far to-day, I am not the least tired."

And then, as if conscious that he owed his best exertions to repay the hospitality of his host, he rallied himself, and entered into conversation with a spirit, intelligence, and occasionally an eloquence that delighted everybody, most especially Mr. Bushfield, who pronounced him afterwards to be fit for a congress man, if he could only fight as well as he could talk.

The subject, we need hardly say, was politics; for we have heard an observing old gentleman affirm, that when you see three men talking together in the United States, it is ten to one the subject is politics, five to one religion, and three to one making a speculation. They were discussing the matter of a new constitution, a species of domestic manufacture exceedingly common, when an old Indian called the Black Warrior came in without ceremony, and took his seat in a corner of the room. Some years previous to the time of which we are speaking, and when the Indians still carried on their depredations upon the new settlements, the Black Warrior had been protected on some occasion by Colonel Dangerfield from the fury of a party of white men who had taken him prisoner. When in process of time the irresistible wave of the white population had scattered the remnants of the Indian tribes on the wings of the wind, the Black Warrior, who

had become obnoxious to his people by his gratitude to Colonel Dangerfield, preferred remaining in the vicinity of the village. Here the colonel built him a hut, and administered to his wants so far as was necessary, for he was still an expert hunter, and he and Leonard were often absent a whole day together in the forests, chasing the deer. He was accustomed to come and go at the house of the colonel without ceremony, and it frequently happened that he did so without uttering a single word, except a short salutation. At other times he would join in the conversation so far as a single remark, or an assent or dissent. But he was a man of few words and of imperturbable gravity, as indeed are all his kind, so much so that the good Quakers, who first settled New Jersey and Pennsylvania, always called them the "sad people."

It happened that Bushfield, who was a man capable of finding fault with singular discretion, was denouncing the general government for not taking sufficient care to protect the exposed frontier from the depredations of the Pottawotomies, the Kickapoos, and other odd-named fellows.

"If I was President of the United States, I'd make them smell brimstone through a nail-hole."

"Eh, good!" said the Black Warrior, after waiting to see that nobody replied; for the savages in this respect set an example to the civilized man; "good! you white men all cowards."

"What's that you say, you old tan-coloured varmint?" cried Bushfield.

"Let him say on," said the colonel.

"I say," continued the Black Warrior, with perfect coolness and indifference, "I say you white men all cowards. Your whole government is

founded in cowardice. You give up your freedom of action; you fetter yourselves with laws till you don't know which way to turn, because you can't take care of yourselves; you give away your money to make roads and bridges, because you are afraid to travel through the woods and swim over rivers; and you pay taxes for soldiers to come and protect you. Huh!—the Indians protect themselves; they neither give away their money nor their liberty to pay other people for taking care of them."

Rainsford was quite struck with this new view of the social system, and entered into some little discussion with the old natural philosopher, in the course of which he took occasion to insist upon the superior comforts and conveniences of civilized life.

"Huh—yes!" said the Black Warrior, "all your lives are spent in slaving to get things that we have learned to do without. The Indian is the only true gentleman; the white man is the Indian's nigger; he works to make guns and blankets for us."

"Niggers!" cried Bushfield, jumping up in a rage; "the Kentuckians niggers!"

The old redskin replied to this only with a significant "huh!" and, lighting his pipe, departed without ceremony to his hut in the forest.

"I never see or think of these people but I pity them," said Rainsford.

"Pity the Ingens! for what?" answered Bushfield, warmly; "I'll tell you what, stranger, if you had lived in Old Kentuck as long as I have, and seen what I have seen, you'd talk other guess, I reckon. When I first remember this country, nobody could sleep of nights for fear of the In-

gens, who were so thick you couldn't see the trees for them. There isn't a soul in all Kentucky but has lost some one of his kin in the Ingen wars, or had his house burnt over his head by these creturs. When they plough their fields, they every day turn up the bones of their own colour and kin who have been scalped, and tortured, and whipped, and starved by these varmints, that are ten thousand times more bloodthirsty than tigers, and as cunning as 'possums. I, stranger, I am the last of my family and name; the rest are all gone, and not one of them died by the hand of his Maker. My grandfather fell and was scalped at Old Chilicothe; my uncle was massacred at Ruddle's Station, after he had surrendered; my father lost his life at the Blue Licks, when all Kentucky was in mourning; my two brothers were kidnapped when they were boys, and never heard of afterwards; and—and—my mother and sister were burnt up in our house, while all the men were out to catch a horse-thief, by a party of Shawanoes. They barred the doors and windows, and my little sister loaded the gun, which my mother fired as fast as she loaded. They killed two of the varmints; the others set fire to the house, and—and—J—s! that any white man should pity an Ingen here on 'the dark and bloody ground!'"

There was an energy, a mixture of wild pathos and singularity in this effusion of Bushfield exceedingly affecting, and Rainsford could not help acknowledging, that to judge rightly of the conduct of mankind in all situations, we should know the necessity under which they laboured, and the provocations to which they were exposed. There are none so virtuous as people out of the reach of temptation, and none so forgiving as those who have no motives for revenge. On retiring to the

room prepared for his reception, the young man seated himself at an open window, and indulged in a train of melancholy reflections. The moon rode high in the heavens, and threw her mild lustre over the quiet scene, interrupted only by the distant howlings of the wild animals of the forest, that sometimes approached near enough to rouse the watchdogs, whose deep-mouthed warnings echoed far and wide. The lofty girdled trees, stripped of their foliage, and bristling the surrounding fields like the tall masts of first rate men-of-war, gave an air of desolation to the landscape, which was bounded at a distance by a dark wall of gloomy forest. He thought of the past, and it presented nothing but sad realities; he thought of the future, and it furnished only gloomy forebodings. "Better were it," thought he, "that I should become at once, what I shall be ere long, as sure as the fate which has for three generations hung over my unhappy race will one day be mine. I should then be at least unconscious of my miseries; but now the very anticipation of what too surely I shall soon be, is a thousand times worse than if I really were what I anticipate. One year more, and then—oh! gracious Providence! what shall I be then?" Unconsciously he groaned, in the agony of his spirit; and Virginia, who was likewise contemplating the scene from an adjoining window, overheard him. Her curiosity and sympathy were both equally excited; but feeling she was intruding on the sorrows of a stranger, she quietly retired to her repose. Yet she could not sleep for a while, and as she lay wondering what might be the cause of such an expression of suffering, she could hear the stranger pacing to and fro across his chamber for hours.

CHAPTER XIII.

The sudden departure of Rainsford, and the mysterious deportment of Master Zeno Paddock.

THE morning was cheerful and smiling, and Mr. Rainsford appeared at breakfast apparently in good spirits; but Virginia, who by some newly-awakened impulse began to feel an interest in a young man who groaned and walked his chamber at night, thought she saw in his face the haggard emblems of long suffering. His features were regular and singularly expressive, but it was not altogether a pleasing expression. The lines of his forehead bore the marks of habitual contraction; his complexion was of an ashy hue; his cheek and eyes somewhat more sunken than beseemed a man so young; and the latter exhibited a cast of fearful apprehension, as though they were watching some secret enemy stealing upon him unawares. His person was of the middle size; his limbs well formed; but there was nothing of the brisk vigour of youth in his action, which was languid, careless, and dilatory. His voice was musical, but it was the music of melancholy.

Suspicion is the product of experience; naturally, our race is full of liberal confidence. In the early stages of society there is little temptation to fraud, and, consequently, less occasion for apprehension; for men have little to lose or gain by it, and hence, in proportion to the simplicity of manners and modes of life will be the

extent of confidence and hospitality. Rainsford was accordingly received unquestioned at the house of Colonel Dangerfield, not only because the colonel was liberal, but that in this sequestered region, as there was no temptation to attract rogues, so there had been no examples to create suspicion.

After breakfast, Colonel Dangerfield proposed taking a ride to view the lands in the neighbourhood.

"I feel an interest in your settling among us, and long to see you getting about it. If you bestir yourself manfully, in two years you will have every thing comfortable about you."

"Two years!" echoed Rainsford, with a sigh.

"What, are you so impatient you can't wait two years? It is but a short time."

"Too long for me," said the other, apparently entirely abstracted from the scene and the occasion.

As they rode to the spot which was the object of their visit, the colonel spoke of what was necessary to be done in the first stage of a new settlement, and entered on a variety of details, such as he thought might interest his guest; but his mind seemed to be wandering to other subjects. Sometimes he did not answer at all, and at others nothing or very little to the purpose.

"Stranger," said Bushfield, who accompanied them on his way home, he not being a resident in the village of Dangerfieldville, "stranger, you don't seem on the track of what the colonel says. But I'll tell you what, a man that comes to settle in these parts must be wide awake, and rip and tear away like a horse in a cane-brake. But somehow you don't appear to mind what's said to you,

any more than my old horse Shavetail, who lost his hearing at the last general training, they fired at such a rate."

"I believe, indeed, I was guilty of the ill manners of thinking of something else; I am apt to be absent," said Rainsford, with a melancholy smile.

"What! you're one of the booky fellers that think of one thing while they are talking about another. There's an old varmint at Frankford Academy, as I heard, that one day cut his forefinger to a sharp point instead of a pencil; for want of thinking what he was about."

"What a beautiful country!" exclaimed Rainsford, as they ascended an eminence which commanded a vast expanse of all the charming varieties of nature; forests of primeval growth, rich meadows, extensive plains, swelling hills gradually rising into mountains, and little rivers winding their way as if they neither knew nor cared whither they were going; "what a beautiful country is Kentucky!"

"Beautiful?—it's transcendent! Yes, if Old Kentucky was cut off from all the rest of the earth, she'd be a world within herself," answered Bushfield.

A spot was selected for the residence of Rainsford on the bank of a little stream which found its way to the Kentucky River through a rich meadow imbosomed in the hills.

"'Tis a little paradise," said he; "but I fear it is too distant from any other habitation."

"Distant!" cried Bushfield, "not at all; why, you and I shall be nigh neighbours. Don't you see that blue mountain yonder? I live just on the other side, and it's only fifteen miles off."

'That's rather too far for me; I don't like to be alone."

"Not like to be alone! why, where under the sun did you spring from, stranger? Now, for my part, I don't want any other company than my dog, my rifle, and plenty of game. I never wish to see the smoke of my neighbour's chimney. You'll have a smart chance of company at Dangerfieldville, which isn't above six miles off, as I should calculate."

After a few minutes' reflection, Mr. Rainsford assented to the location of his house, observing, it was after all, perhaps, of little consequence where he pitched his tent, to the great disgust of Bushfield, who set him down in his own mind as a fellow that hadn't fire enough in him to prevent his being frostbitten in the dog-days.

According to the custom of the backwoods, the inhabitants of the village turned out the next day, and before the sun was set had built him a stately log house of two rooms and a garret, all neat and complete, and fit for a king. But in these new countries it is much more difficult to furnish than to build a house, and it became necessary to resort to some of the older settlements before his mansion could be prepared for his reception.

"You've got a cage, said Mr. Littlejohn, "and now all you want is a bird to sing in it;" and he looked significantly at the fair Virginia, whose head was full of the groans and perturbed midwatch pacings she had heard the night before. The damsel blushed deeply, while a singularly inexplicable expression passed like a cloud over the face of the young man as he replied,—

"I fear no bird will ever sing in cage of mine, except the screech-owl or the raven."

"I shall hear you sing another tune before long. Why, what will you do, who have been raised where people stand as thick as canes in a cane-brake, in a house all alone by yourself? Miss Dangerfield shall recommend you to a little bird that sings like a Virginia nightingale."

"Miss Dangerfield will do no such thing," replied Virginia, and left the room in a flurry.

Rainsford walked forth to the house of one Zeno Paddock,* who officiated in the twofold capacity of schoolmaster and political oracle to young and old of the village of Dangerfieldville. His great ambition was to set up a newspaper, but he could not yet bring the matter about to his satisfaction. Here the young gentleman staid so long that Mr. Littlejohn wondered what he could have to say to that eternal busybody, whom he despised from the bottom of his heart, inasmuch as he was not content with attending to his own business, which was bad enough in all conscience, but interfered with that of all his neighbours. There was nothing Ulysses held so cheap as a man who had a decided taste

* On scanning our work a little more critically, after completing the story, it for the first time occurred to us that the sketch of Zeno Paddock, in his compound character of schoolmaster and editor, might possibly be construed into an attempt to throw ridicule on these two classes. We take this opportunity of entirely disclaiming any such purpose; our object having been simply to portray a character from nature, such as without doubt has existed, and we dare say still exists, in situations similar to that in which we have imagined him. We should be the last in the world to attempt weakening the influence or undermining the respectability of two professions to which the present age owes, and posterity will owe, more, perhaps, than to any others whatever. Yet still, there certainly are among them persons whose follies and whose ignorance diminish the just influence of the whole; and to ridicule these is to vindicate, not to undervalue, those who are objects of respect and consideration.

for any species of employment except that of killing time. Zeno was a huge devourer of newspapers, and was generally found with one in his hand at every interval of leisure.

One evening, some ten days afterwards, all the family, with the exception of Leonard, who had gone to the state capital to finish the study of the law, was gathered together. Rainsford announced his intention of not taking possession of his new establishment until the ensuing spring, as he should not like to sojourn alone in the wilderness during the dreary season of winter. The colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield expressed their satisfaction at the prospect of having him for a welcome guest some time longer.

Mr. Rainsford appeared much affected. "You have been kind, very kind to me. A stranger, and without the least claim to your hospitality, you have received and entertained me as a son or a brother. But—but—I do not mean to spend the winter in this part of the world."

Virginia made a sudden movement of surprise, and the colonel exclaimed, "Indeed! I am sorry for it."

"No; I have thought—I never was at New Orleans. I should like to see the banks of the great river Mississippi; and besides, I can furnish myself with several articles which I confess my house stands wofully in need of. I shall return early in the spring, and then set myself seriously to work, clearing land and raising corn."

Nothing was said against this arrangement, and in a few days Rainsford was on his way to the Ohio, whence he meant to embark in the first convenient conveyance on his destination. He took leave of the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield

with the deepest expressions of obligation; of Virginia with the frankness of a brother, while she parted from him with the only appearance of affectation she had ever been known to exhibit. She was in the highest spirits, and laughed excessively, particularly where there was no occasion.

"Can I bring you any thing from New Orleans?" said he.

"Let me see—O yes, bring me a parrot, or a monkey, or something to amuse me; for really, Mr. Rainsford, I have been almost tired to death this summer for want of agreeable company. How I should like to be always in a crowd!" This was a great story.

"There are plenty of paroquets in the woods."

"Yes, but they are so dull, they don't talk, and what is a parrot or a man that can't speak?"

"Well, Miss Dangerfield, I shall certainly attend to your wishes. I will endeavour to find you a suitable companion among the parrots or the monkeys."

There was something in this little dialogue that grated harshly on the feelings of both, and a pause ensued, which lasted until Rainsford was summoned to proceed on his voyage down the river.

"Farewell, madam, and farewell, colonel," said he, with deep emotion, "and farewell, Miss Dangerfield;" and his voice assumed a tone of melancholy kindness.

"Good-by, Mr. Rainsford," said Virginia; "don't forget the parrot and the monkey."

Virginia was so merry for at least an hour after his departure, that her mother could not help noticing her extraordinary vivacity.

"One would think you rejoiced at Mr. Rains-

ford's going away, and yet I cannot help regretting to lose his society next winter. He was not lively, but sensible and well informed, and when he did talk it was very agreeably."

"Well, for my part," said the young lady, "I think he was the stupidest young man I ever met with in all my life."

"My dear Virginia, you must excuse me, but I don't believe one word you have said."

Virginia laughed, and ran away to the river's side; but the boat in which Rainsford embarked had already disappeared in a turn of the river, and she returned home after a long lingering walk, in a mood so quiet and sedate, that she scarcely spoke a word all the rest of the day.

Hardly had Rainsford departed when Zeno Paddock made his appearance, with a newspaper in his hand, and asked to speak with Colonel Dangerfield in private. Their conference lasted rather longer than was customary with the colonel, who generally eschewed the company of Zeno. What was its import he did not think proper to disclose; but he was observed to be absent and thoughtful all the rest of the day, contrary to his usual habits, for he was a man of great vivacity of character. Zeno marched off with an air of great importance, occasionally stopping to look at his newspaper, and nodding his head significantly as he carefully folded it up and put it in his pocket.

"I suppose that varlet wanted you to assist him in setting up his newspaper?" said Littlejohn, wishing to sound the colonel.

"It was about a newspaper," replied the other, and taking horse, rode out without asking the company of his friend.

"There's some mystery in this matter," quoth Littlejohn, and he went to consult Pompey the Great, who still lived in all the dignity of aristocracy, and was as tenacious of the honour of the family as ever.

"I'll tell you what," said Pompey; "'spose he want massa to scribe to he paper."

"Pooh! nonsense."

"Well den, 'spose he want to insult him bout Massa Leonard setting up for member of 'sembly."

"Pish! do you think he'd consult anybody but me in matters of such consequence?"

"Well den, 'spose—I dare say it must have bin someting else, hey, Massa Leetlejohn?"

"Pomp, I didn't think you was such an old blockhead."

"Well den, 'spose you go ax somebody wiser dan me," said the great Ducklegs in a huff, and the two friends parted in no very good-humour with each other, leaving the mystery to be explained by the course of time, and the events it carries in its mighty womb.

CHAPTER XIV.

A voyage, a story, and a land adventure.

THE boat in which Rainsford took passage down the Kentucky River was bound on a voyage up the Ohio, and consequently at the junction of the two rivers he shifted himself and his "plunder," to the first which happened to come by on its way to New Orleans. This proved to be a broad-horn, of which, by a singular coincidence, our old acquaintance Samuel Hugg was captain and owner. Many long years had elapsed since he carried the fortunes of Colonel Dangerfield down the Ohio; but they had passed over him, as the elements pass over the rugged rock, making it only more rough and hard. He was still as straight and almost as tall as the sycamores that tower along the banks of the western rivers, and his rough vivacity remained undiminished, though he sometimes complained, or rather swore most originally, at the steamboats, which were now just beginning to make their first trials on the western waters, preparatory to the mighty change they have since worked in the destinies of that extensive region. The sagacious mind of Captain Sam foresaw in their success the ruin of his business, and the extinction of the broad-horns on the Ohio and Mississippi, and he often took occasion to call down upon them the judgment of snags, sawyers, sandbanks, and bursting of boilers. Nevertheless, he was sometimes

wrought upon to confess that the varmints were sweet creturs, and that it was "Transcendent to see them ploughing their way up the Mississippi, as if the d—l himself kicked 'em on end, anyhow. That Daniel Boone is a screamer," would he say; "she beats the old man himself, and he was no fool, I tell you. I used to know him when he was sixty year old, and then he could beat any man in Old Kentuck shooting at a mark. I remember I stood once a hundred yards off, and let him shoot a rifle ball at a tin pint mug right on the top of my head, and I wish I may be utterly onswoggled if he didn't tip it off as slick as bear's grease, anyhow. Ah! there's no such screamers nowadays."

The captain, as we before observed, was a mighty considerable talker, and in the twilight of the autumnal evening, as they glided silently down the stream, he delighted to tell of his adventures on the waters of the west, which he had navigated for more than forty years. Some of his stories were what are deemed tough, and it required a little extension of one's faith to believe them; but there was an extravagance about them which at times was not a little amusing, when coupled with a concatenation of phrases that may fairly be called inimitable. We ought not to omit recording that Cherub Spooney, now no longer a smart chance of a boy, but a full-grown man, was still attached to the service of Captain Hugg, and at the time we are speaking of officiated as second to the commander, to whom he considered himself equal in every respect. Besides Spooney, the crew consisted of two or three new hands, and the invariable appendage of all these boats, a gentleman of colour, officiating as cook, and who

Captain Sam swore was the knowingest chap he ever knew. "The varmint can't read," would he say, "but I wish I may be split into shingles, if he can't tell what's in a newspaper by only smelling it."

One evening, Rainsford, who found his melancholy charmed in spite of himself by the interesting novelty of his situation, and the strange language and manners of his companions, sat listening to the conversation of the crew as they were enjoying one of the most beautiful twilights nature ever bestowed upon the earth. There was a silence, a luxurious softness in the aspect and quiet repose of the crystal river, as it glided noiselessly along between low level banks from which sprung giant trees, that spread their broad limbs like vast umbrellas, that was exquisitely agreeable, and harmonized delightfully with the silence of the earth, which here bore scarce a trace of the labours of man. They were now approaching the junction of the two great rivers, which, rising in distant regions of the world, at length unite their waters in one mighty stream, and journey together to the ocean of oblivion.

The party was seated on the roof of the broadhorn, which consisted of boards inclining at each end from the centre, so as to let the rain run off, and singing or telling stories according to custom, aided by the indispensable accompaniment of a competent supply of whiskey. Rainsford had seated himself also upon the roof of the boat, to enjoy the scene before him, and was now casting a glance of admiration on either side; now busying himself in a labyrinth of reflections, which, whether he turned to the past, the present, or the future, were equally fraught with unqualified bit-

terness. Gradually, however, his attention was arrested by the following extraordinary tale.

"Well then, captain, if he won't sing, suppose you tell us another story," quoth Cherub Spooney.

"Ay, do now, captain; tell us the story of the strange cretur you picked up going down the river," said another.

"Ah! now do, Massa Cappin Sam," quoth blackey.

"Well, I'll tell you how it was. We had hauled in the broad-horn close ashore to wood; wind was up-stream, so we couldn't make much headway anyhow. Bill told the nigger to cook a few steaks off Clumsy—that was what we called the bear I shot the day before—well, while we were a-wooding—"

"That story's as long as the Mississippi," said one.

"Shut pan, and sing dumb, or I'll throw you into the drink," exclaimed Spooney.

"Why, I heard that story before."

"Well, supposing you did, I didn't; go on, captain."

"Well, as I was saying, Spoon, the nigger—"

"I tink he might call um gemman of choler," muttered blackey.

"The nigger went to cook some bear while we were wooding, so that we might have somethin to go upon. When we came back, what kind of a varmint do you think we started in the canebrake?"

"I reckon an alligator," said blackey.

"Hold your tongue, you beauty, or you shall smell brimstone through a nail hole," cried Spooney; "go ahead, go ahead, captain."

"Well, as I was saying we started the drollest

varmint perhaps you ever *did* see. Its face was covered with hair, like a bull buffalo, all but a little place for his eyes to see through. It looked mighty skeery, as though it thought itself a gone sucker, and calculated we were going to eat it, before we killed it; but we carried it aboard the broadhorn, and took compassion on the poor thing. I slapped it on the back, and told it to stand up on its hind legs, and I wish I may run on a sawyer if it didn't turn out to be a live dandy."

"Had it a tail?"

"I'll wool lightning out of you, Bill, if you interrupt me."

"That's actionable in New Orleans."

"Ha! ha! whoop! wake snakes—go ahead, go ahead, and don't be so rantankerous," shouted the audience.

"I swear, if he once gets my tail up, he'll find I'm from the forks of Roaring River, and a bit of a screamer," said Captain Hugg.

"Well, go ahead—go ahead—tell us about the dandy—ha, ha, ha! I should like to have seen it when it stood upon its hind legs. What did it say?"

"Why, I asked what they called such queer things where it came from, and it said Basil; and that the captain of the steamboat had put it ashore because it insisted on going into the ladies' cabin. Well, some of us called it summer-savory, some catnip, some sweet basil, and we had high fun with the cretur, and laughed till we were tired. And then we set him on a barrel forked eend downwards—"

"Yough! yough! yough!" ejaculated blackey, bursting into one of his indescribable laughs.

"No laughing in the ranks there—throw that

nigger overboard if he laughs before I come to the right place, and then you may all begin. Well, then, I began to ask him all about himself; and he told me he was a great traveller; and that he had been so far north, that the north star was south of him. And then he asked me if I knew any thing of navigation and the use of the globes. 'To be sure I do,' said I; 'aint they made for people to live on?' Then he inquired if I ever heard of Hershell, or Hisshell, I forget which, and I told him I knew him as well as a squirrel knows a hickory-nut from an acorn.' 'He's dead,' said the queer cretur.

"'No, no,' says I, 'that won't do, there's no mistake in Shavetail, you may swear. I saw a pedler with some splendid sausages made of red flannel and turnips go by our house and I changed with him some wooden bacon hams. He came from Litchfield, where Hershell lived, and didn't say a word about it.' Here he made a note in his book, and I begun to smoke him for one of these fellers that drive a sort of trade of making books about Old Kentuck, and the western country; so I thought I'd set him barking up the wrong tree a little. And I told him some stories that were enough to set the Mississippi afire; but he put them all down in his book. One of my men was listening, and he sung out, 'Well, Sam, you do take the rag off the bush, that's sartin;' and I was fearful dandy would find out I was smoking him; so I jumped up and told Tom a short horse was soon curried, and I'd knock him into a cocked-hat if he said another word. And that broke up the conversation.

"Next morning we stopped to wood a little below New-Madrid, and the dandy, who seemed one of the

curiousest creturs you ever saw, and was poking his nose everywhere, like a dog smelling out a trail, went with me a little way into a cane-brake, where we met a woman living under a board shed, with four or five children. Dandy asked her if she was all alone—she said her husband had gone up to Yellow Banks to look for better land. Then he wanted to know what she had to eat, and she said nothing but sweet pumpkins. 'What, no meat?' said he—'No, nothing but sweet pumpkins.' 'Well,' said dandy, 'I never saw any thing half so bad as this in the old countries.' And then he put his hand in his pocket, and gave her a *pickalion.* 'Thank you,' said she, 'as I am a living woman, I've tasted no meat for the last fortnight—nothing but venison and wild turkeys.' 'The d—l you hain't,' said dandy, and wanted to get the pickalion back again."

"What a wild goose of a feller, not to know that nothing is called meat in these parts but salt pork and beef. He's a pretty hand to write books of travels," said Spooney.

"I wish I may be forced to pass the 'old sycamore root' up-stream twice a day, if I'd give the Mississippi Navigator for a whole raft of such creturs. But what did you do with him at last, captain?" said another.

"Why, I got tired of making fun of the ring-tail-roarer, and happening to meet the steamboat Daniel Boone, Captain Lansdale, coming down stream, just as she had smashed a broad-horn, and the owner was sitting on the top of it, singing,

'Hail, Columbia, happy land,
If I ain't ruin'd I'll be ——.

I persuaded the captain to let dandy come aboard

again, on his promising to keep out of the ladies' cabin. So we shook hands, and I wish I might be smash'd too if I wouldn't sooner hunt such a raccoon than the fattest buck that ever broke bread in old Kentuck."

The next morning the broad-horn arrived at the junction of the two great rivers Ohio and Mississippi, which Rainsford had anticipated with no small degree of impatience. But he found there was nothing to the eye particularly striking. The imagination indeed might dwell on the endless course of the two streams here rolling along the collected waters of such vast regions. The union of these mighty rivers was consummated in the midst of a dead solitude. For many miles before it joined the Mississippi, the Ohio glided through a low swampy wilderness, quietly, and with a wave as limpid as the crystal spring, until turning a sharp angle it met the swift torrent of the great father of waters, the "wicked river," as the boatmen called it, and was whirled away by its irresistible impetuosity. It was the union of a gentle, unresisting maiden with a rough and angry giant. The boiling eddies, the turbid waters of the Mississippi, inevitably conjure up the idea of an eternal warfare with the earth; it tears its banks as it rushes along; and sometimes, as if impatient of its devious windings, forces itself a passage through a projecting point, making a new channel in one place, and leaving another dry. The chief ambition of a western adventurer is to found a great city on speculation; and it may be well supposed that the junction of these two great rivers did not escape the keen eye of these sagacious people, who may be said to live on futurity. Tradition said that a city had once been founded

here, consisting of some houses built on piles. But the first rising of the Ohio inundated the surrounding region, and discouraged the adventurers. Rainsford saw but a single house, standing alone in the vast solitude, and making if possible its loneliness more striking. Its windows were broken, its outside blackened by the weather, and such was its melancholy aspect that Captain Hugg said it always put him in mind of the voice of one crying in the wilderness.

Launched on the bosom of the swift Mississippi the broad-horn proceeded with an accelerated course, and without stopping, until they arrived near the little town of New-Madrid, where it was necessary to halt for a supply of wood. It was a close sultry day, with scarcely a breath of air stirring, and the atmosphere of a hazy obscurity, which almost always lays a load of languor on the spirits. The birds were sheltered in the deep forests, where they remained panting in silence; and the few domestic animals to be seen, ventured as far into the rapid stream as they dared, and there stood lashing the insects with their tails, listlessly and languidly, as if the effort was almost beyond their strength. While the argonauts of the broad-horn were gathering drift-wood along the shore, Rainsford, accompanied by Captain Sam, strolled to the confines of the Great Prairie, as it is called, which extends for many miles from the borders of the Mississippi. As they stood admiring the rolling expanse of vapours which gave to its vast surface the appearance of the distant ocean in a calm, and coursing with their eyes the dead and noiseless solitude, a distant rumbling sound caught their attention for a moment—ceasing for a moment, and in a moment beginning again, apparently nearer than before. It was suc-

ceeded by a vast cloud of dust, which all at once obscured the air, and hid from their view the face of the world.

"Cut dirt, stranger, for your life; there's a whirlwind coming," cried Captain Sam, suiting the action to the word.

But he had scarcely spoken when the earth opened between them, and they stood rocking to and fro on either side a yawning chasm. The ground rose in waves, like the sea in a storm; the vast trees that skirted the bare precincts of the endless plain nodded and struck their high heads together with a crash, and lashed each other with their giant limbs; the earth burst its strong ribs, and rose, and split into vast ravines; the waters broke through their bounds, and while they formed new lakes, or forced themselves into new channels in some places, in others they left large spaces high and dry. Anon the waves of the firm-fixed earth subsided for a moment, and she lay trembling and quivering as in the paroxysm of an ague.

During this appalling interval, Rainsford and his companion rose from the ground, where they had been thrown by the resistless force of the vibrations, and instinctively sought refuge they knew not whither. The captain made towards the river, as being his natural element; while the other climbed one of the lofty trees that skirted the bounds of the interminable plain, from a vague apprehension of the waters, which, as well as the earth, seemed struggling to free themselves from the fetters of Nature's inflexible laws. He had scarcely done this, when again the same appalling noises approached from another quarter, and again the firm-set earth began to heave and curl itself

into a sea of waves that seemed to approach from a distance, gathering strength, and rising higher and higher, until they burst, scattering vast volumes of water and sand high in the air, and leaving the ground seamed with deep chasms, which the traveller still surveys with astonishment and dismay. In a few moments the earth seemed changed into a different element, and to become an ocean. A large portion of the district around was covered with the waters, and the tree on which Rainsford had sought refuge stood rocking to and fro in the midst of them. Darkness, or at least an obscurity, like that of a total eclipse of the sun, came over the world; and such was the dismay of all animated nature, that a little bird came and sought refuge in the bosom of the young man, where it lay quiet and tame in the trance of terror. He could feel its little heart beat against his own, and the communion of sympathy between him and the panting flutterer was not unsoothing in this terrible hour.

Casting his eye towards the town of New-Madrid, he beheld the houses tottering and tumbling to pieces, and the people fleeing to and fro in all the desperation of overwhelming terror. Turning to the Mississippi, he suddenly observed it in one particular spot boil up, and overflow its banks, carrying boats and every thing that floated on its surface far over into the fields, where they were left perfect wrecks. Nay, it spared neither the living nor the dead, for all at once he saw the little graveyard of the village, with its mouldering bones and quiet inhabitants, lifted, as it were, from its resting-place, and hurled into the torrent, where it and they were scattered, never to be associated again in time or in eternity. In this situation he

remained all that day and night, amid a succession of shocks that seemed to threaten the annihilation of the whole scheme of nature, and the production of a second chaos. Such was the exhaustion of his frame, that he could scarcely support himself; and had he not wedged his body in the crotch of the tree, he must have fallen and perished. In the morning the waters around him had gathered into a newly-formed lake at a distance of a few miles, and the shocks intermitted. The little bird that had lain all night panting in his bosom, apparently revived by the presence of the cheerful morning sun, struggled from its place of refuge, flew away, like the dove from the ark when the waters had subsided, and did not return. Stiff and exhausted, he descended from his perch, and with great labour and difficulty made his way to the town, where he found a few persons who had ventured to return to their homes, or rather the ruins of their homes. Fortunately, these dwelt not in palaces or stately houses, but in cottages of logs and clay, and few or no lives had been lost. Many were missing for a time, but they all returned again save one man, who had been left on an island in a lake formed by the convulsions of the earthquake, and whose bones were accidentally found long afterwards.

Among those who made their appearance during the day, to the great satisfaction of our hero, was the captain and crew of the broad-horn in which he had taken his passage. The story they told of their translation from the waters to the land was tinged with many wonders and extravagances, which, being repeated day after day, and year after year, gradually approached to the incredible. It was a time and a region of wonders,

however, and not the least of these was the extraordinary abstinence of Captain Sam and his people. They neither swore nor drank whiskey that day, nor during the continuance of the shocks of the earthquake, which lasted with occasional intervals so long, that the people of the neighbourhood got used to it, insomuch that a veritable traveller relates, that going ashore near New-Madrid, and visiting the house of an old lady, he was alarmed by certain disagreeable tremblings of the earth; whereupon she exclaimed, in an encouraging tone, "O, don't be frightened, stranger; it's only the earthquake." We are sorry to say that the reformation of these worthies lasted no longer than the earthquake, and that they returned in due time to their old habits. Tradition says that this remarkable phenomenon produced a radical reform in the phraseology of Captain Sam Hugg; for that whereas before he was accustomed to designate himself as "half horse, half alligator, and a little of the steamboat," he ever afterwards added "a small sprinkling of an earthquake" to the former ingredients.

Rainsford remained in the village of New-Madrid several days, in a state of mind little to be envied. The tremendous and appalling scenes he had encountered, operating on his gloomy, nervous, and apprehensive temperament, had increased his propensity to melancholy anticipations. Such dispositions are almost always inclined to fanaticism, and prone to wrest the great phenomena of nature from the mysterious universal agents of Providence, to the paltry and miserable instruments of abject superstition. With a vain and impotent presumption, they imagine the wrath of Heaven is roused for the attainment of petty

purposes of individual punishment, and exclaim, in the language of the insane interpreter of the Divine will,—

> I saw the bolt of heaven launch'd from on high,
> Mark'd its bright course, and lo! it kill'd a fly!

Under the influence of this delusion, he imagined that there was something ominous, something prophetic in the earthquake which had thus arrested his voyage down the river. He viewed it as a distinct indication that he was not permitted to proceed for the purposes he had in view, because these purposes were become unnecessary by the sure and certain fate that awaited him, and which he now fully persuaded himself was in a swift progress to its final consummation. "To what end," would the fiend whisper to him, 'to what end visit distant scenes? to what purpose enlarge thy mind, or cultivate thy understanding, or gratify thy curiosity, by contemplating the vast works of the creation? or to what purpose set thy house in order, since in a little while, yea, as sure as the voice of the Deity prophesies in the thunder, the whirlwind, and the earthquake, in a *little* while thou wilt neither be able to enjoy the noble feast of the mind, nor taste the blessings of a peaceful home?"

Guided by this dangerous monitor, Rainsford, after lingering about the village, where his nerves and his imagination were irritated and sublimated by the perpetual recurrence of the shocks of the earthquake, for some days, and enduring the harassing struggle of not being able to make up his mind whether he should proceed to New Orleans or not, at length determined to retrace his steps to the place whence he had departed, and he re-

turned unexpectedly to the village of Dangerfieldville, after an absence of about a month.

Colonel Dangerfield received him with hospitable civility, for it was almost a part of his religion to treat every human being as if he had gained a sanctuary when once beneath the shelter of his roof. But Rainsford, whose nerves vibrated to the slightest touch of neglect as well as the slightest indication of a want of cordiality, saw, or fancied he saw, a diminution in the honest warmth with which the colonel had bade him farewell in the manner he received him now. On the part of Mrs. Dangerfield all was kindness and matronly welcome. The young lady met him with a lively nonchalance.

"You have made a quick voyage and a speedy return," said she; "well, have you brought me the present you promised?"

"I have not been to New Orleans," was the reply. "No farther than New Madrid."

"Well, and what did you see there, any parrots or monkeys?"

"No, I only saw an earthquake."

"An earthquake!" exclaimed they all, supposing he was jesting, as they had not yet heard of it in this remote region, where its effects were not felt.

"How did it look?" asked Virginia.

"It looked like the last agony of expiring nature—as if the Omnipotent had resigned his empire of the universe, and left the rebel elements to struggle for mastery. It looked—pray Heaven I may never look upon its like again."

"Come, come, young man," said the colonel, in rather a severe tone, "no jesting on such subjects. It is unworthy a rational being, as of the Being that created him."

"Jesting! as I live, sir, I saw the earth rolling in solid waves, and felt myself tossed on them as if I had been on the sea. I saw the trees rock, and knock their heads against each other till they dashed themselves to pieces. I saw the ground open, and spout out lakes and rivers. And I saw the churchyard, and the graves, and the mouldering bones, all lifted up and carried away out of sight. If such are the jestings of the great Ruler of the universe, what must his anger be?"

The hearers were overawed by the picture he drew, and the deep seriousness of his tones convinced them he was at least in earnest. Virginia, as she scanned his face, saw in it such a change since they parted, such an expression of haggard terror, and such a pale hue of ill health, that she felt the dews on her eyelashes, and a pang shot through her heart at having sported with the feelings of one whom she was sure was labouring under sickness of body or mind.

Further inquiries produced a more detailed and coherent account of the great phenomenon he had witnessed. But still there was an air of wildness approaching to rhapsody in his manner and language, which seemed to indicate that his nerves had not yet recovered the shock of such an appalling scene, nor his imagination settled down into a state of wholesome repose. The whole of the remainder of the day he was restless and unquiet; and any sudden jar or noise made him start as if apprehensive of approaching danger. Colonel Dangerfield, as he watched the singularities of his conduct, could not help recalling to mind the communications of that knowing politician, learned wight, and pestilent busybody, Zeno Paddock.

CHAPTER XV.

The Author doeth homage to his mother earth, after which he describes a hunting match.

WINTER, with his hoary beard and fiery proboscis, whence hung glittering icicles like jewels from barbarian nose, now stripped the forest of its green leaves, the gardens of their blushing honours, and cast them away like worthless weeds to wither and die, and return like man, and all created nature, to their common mother, earth. There are who complain of the different dispensations of Providence to man and the world he inhabits; that the former knows but one fleeting spring, while the other every revolving year renews its youthful beauty till the consummation of all things arrives. But beshrew such pestilent humgruffians! hath not the wise Dispenser of all good things made ample amends by giving us memory to recall our youthful pleasures; fancy to paint a thousand scenes fairer and more delicious than spring e'er offered to the eye of mortals? And last and best of all, hath he not given us Hope, whose glorious visions far exceed all that the May of life ever realized? The richest gifts showered on the earth; her diamonds, gold, and carpets of flowers; her power of renewing all her youthful charms at each revolving year, are nothing to those bestowed on man—his reason, and his immortality.

Yet let us not undervalue our good old mother earth, for good she is, ay, and beautiful too, whether clothed in the eastern magnificence of imperial green, or basking in the glowing gold of summer sunshine, or flaunting like Joseph in the many-coloured coat of autumn, or wrapped in her wintry winding-sheet, she awaits like the just man the hour when she shall arise more glorious for her long sleep. Who can contemplate her smiling valleys, rich meadows, golden harvests, grateful flowers, whispering woods, endless winding rivers, boundless pathless seas, full-bosomed hills, and cloud-capped mountains, without a feeling of awful recognition of Infinite Power? Who can behold the admirable union and aptness with which all these participate in one great end without doing homage to Infinite Wisdom? And who can revel in the balmy air, inhale the breath of the meadows and the flowers, listen to the music of her birds, her brooks, her whispering leaves, her answering echoes, and taste her other bounteous gifts of all that man can wish or enjoy, without bowing his head in grateful acknowledgement of Infinite Mercy?

Though long divorced from the country, we have not yet, thank Heaven! quite lost the rural feeling. We can still recall the scenes of early life with a pleasure unalloyed by pining regrets for the past or unmanly fears of the future; and we often steal a few days from the racket of the noisy town to bury ourselves in the holy quiet of the mountains; renew once more the simple pleasures of days long past, and be a boy again with our own little boys; to chase butterflies and grasshoppers; attack wasps' nests; tumble on the haycocks; gather chestnuts; ramble

whole mornings without object or e[illegible] and last, and dearest pleasure of all, follow so[illegible]e mountain brook through its romantic rugged solitudes; and pit our art against the cautious timidity of the speckled monarch of the leaping stream.

The winter brought with it a cessation of outdoor employments, save that of hunting, to the rural inhabitants of the village of Dangerfieldville, and gathered them, especially of evenings, around the glowing fire, where Master Littlejohn revelled in the luxury of three chairs to his heart's content. Sometimes they made parties to hunt the deer, or the scoundrel bear, whose rugged nature and rugged hide make him the scandal of the forest. On these occasions Bushfield was always summoned to take the command, and never conqueror led his army to the field with more eager appetite for glory than our gallant woodman. Rainsford, who by degrees seemed to have in some measure recovered his usual level of mind and spirits, often accompanied them, and always felt the resistless inspiration of the sport. Even Mr. Littlejohn occasionally gathered himself together, and sallying forth among the rest, rifle in hand, "talked big," as the Black Warrior phrased it, and did marvellously little. It was his invariable custom to place himself in some convenient spot, and there await the coming of the deer. If it came, he had his shot and generally missed; if it came not, he had a most excellent opportunity of boasting what he would have done had an opportunity offered. One day when the Black Warrior happened to be on the same station with him, Littlejohn missed a fine fat buck, which came leaping along within ten yards of him.

"Huh!" said the red man, "your rifle is be-

witched, you must go and get some great medicine to cure it."

"Medicine? What, would you have me give my gun a dose of physic?"

"I mean great medicine. Something to make him shoot straight. Something Great Spirit give to his good people to keep off bad one."

"Pooh—do you think the Great Spirit meddles with such nonsense as shooting a deer?"

"Yes, Great Spirit meddle with every thing. I go hunting, I shoot, shoot, shoot, no kill any thing, bad spirit won't let me, deer run away, birds fly away, no hit. Well, I go to conjurer, and he give me great medicine Great Spirit give him, and then when I fire, huh! down drop deer, bird, bear, every thing; bad spirit gone away. Well, I go fish—fish come, nibble, nibble, nibble, no bite, no catch one at all, bad spirit come and say no. Well, I go to conjurer again, and he give me 'nother great medicine. Then I go fish once more, and then, huh! I catch many as I please. Bad spirit gone again."

"Now you don't believe this, do you?"

"Believe? Indian know so. You white men say, proof of the pudding in the eating. I shoot nothing, I catch no fish, I go get great medicine, den I shoot every thing, never miss. And I get fish, many as I can carry. Huh! is not all owing to the great medicine?"

"I don't believe one word of it."

"No! look here." And opening his tobacco-pouch he carefully brought out an eagle's feather. "There, there one great medicine. I leave him home I shoot nothing, I bring with me I never miss. Huh! You white men think you have all the great medicines. Indian got some too. But hark!"

And at that moment they heard the sonorous music of the deep-mouthed hounds, echoing far and wide, and approaching the pass they occupied, in full career. Nigher and nigher came their cry, and Littlejohn, who had neglected to reload his rifle, set about it immediately. But before the deed was done, the deer, with his antlers thrown back on his neck, and eyes almost starting out of his head with fear, came bounding past like the wind. But the charmed rifle of the Black Warrior arrested his course; the bullet entered his breast, he sprung his last spring, and fell dead.

"There—you see, great medicine do that."

"Great fiddlestick," quoth Littlejohn, who was not a little jealous of the success of the Indian.

A North American Indian, in his primitive state, never betrays the least emotion except when he is drunk. None study dignity and self-possession as he does; nor is there in the civilized world, or in the courts of eastern despots, a greater slave to etiquette. In battle, he strikes down his enemy with graceful deliberation. At the stake, he inflicts the keenest tortures with the same indifference he endures them. He never declaims except when inspired by whiskey. He never interrupts another, and he never boasts of his exploits. When he appeals to his tribe for any new dignity, he relates them with an air of indifference, and leaves the audience to say what shall be his reward. When the full-blooded Indian means mischief, he is silent; and when the half-breed weeps, beware of him.

The Black Warrior affected to take no notice of the contemptuous epithet of Littlejohn. The rest of the party now came up, and being satisfied with the sport, and laden with game, returned to the village in triumph.

CHAPTER XVI.

Rainsford is besieged by the Holy Alliance of Zeno and Judith—The former achieves a great discovery.

THE state of depression under which Rainsford had laboured for some time previous to the period of his introduction to the reader, naturally made him exceedingly sensitive to the slightest appearance of neglect, and peculiarly sagacious in detecting its first dawnings. Since his return to the village, he fancied that there was a falling off in the cordiality with which he had heretofore uniformly been treated by Colonel Dangerfield. The rest of the family were, as usual, kind and attentive; but although the colonel never on any occasion committed an overt act that distinctly marked a change in his feelings towards his guest, for that was against the canons of Old Virginia and her buxom daughter Kentucky, still there was something wanting, some inexplicable, indescribable little demonstrations of welcome, which the sensitive, melancholy stranger felt, but could not analyze. He now seldom or never asked Rainsford to accompany him abroad, and the interest he had heretofore taken in his affairs seemed to have subsided into something like indifference.

"I will no longer trespass on his hospitality," said the young man, and sallied once more forth to visit Master Zeno Paddock, with whom he held a long confabulation, the result of which will ap-

pear anon in all human probability. That same evening he took the opportunity, on some allusion being made to something or other that indicated an understanding on the part of the family of Colonel Dangerfield that he was to spend the rest of the winter with them, to observe, with some little embarrassment, that he was about to remove to Mr. Paddock's, who lived nearly opposite, a distance of two or three hundred yards.

The ladies expressed surprise, and the elder made some little attempt at remonstrance against this desertion; the colonel, as if offering a sacrifice of inclination to old habits, compelled himself to make a few civil speeches; but they wanted the eloquence of cordiality, and the thing was soon settled that the removal should take place the next morning. Additional melancholy gathered in the face of Rainsford after this, and he retired earlier than usual to his room, but not to his repose. Virginia heard him pacing to and fro, and detected, or fancied she detected, the occasional murmurs of a sorrowful or discontented spirit. Again her curiosity was excited, her sympathy awakened, by the apparent mystery of his nightly wakefulness; and her mind grew more and more confirmed in making it the subject of frequent contemplation.

The next day Mr. Rainsford took possession of his homely lodgings; but the change proved little satisfactory, and instead of finding greater quiet, as well as more perfect freedom from observation and restraint, he was perpetually pestered with the attentions of Zeno Paddock, together with his excellent helpmate Mrs. Judith, whose curiosity vied with that of her husband. The classical academy of Zeno being situated a little distance

in front of his log castle, he caused his tripod of authority to be forthwith removed to the vicinity of a window, which commanded a full view of the chamber of Rainsford, and enabled him to superintend the motions of that mysterious personage. If he visited Colonel Dangerfield, which he still continued to do occasionally, Master Zeno, as the boys always called him, was on nettles till he had an opportunity of questioning him as to what was said, done, thought, and looked on the important occasion; or if he walked forth into the village, or down by the river-side, or into the neighbouring forest, ten to one Master Zeno left his dominion to the lord of misrule, and sallied out to watch his motions. Often when Rainsford fancied himself alone, he would find his tormentor close behind him, and not unfrequently he seemed to come out of the earth, or to drop from the clouds, so sudden was his appearance.

Mrs. Judith, who was so ugly that one might be almost tempted to suppose it was her identical self that had cut off the head of Holofernes, and placed it in triumph on her own shoulders, was not a whit more chary of her company at home. She would bring her work, and sit with him, and put as many cross questions as a superlative pettifogger does when he wants to confound a simple witness. Indeed, her curiosity passed all human understanding.

"I am sure you must be melancholy, Mr. Rainsford," said she, on one of these occasions.

"No."

"Then I'm sure you are sick. Do let me give you some horehound or catnip-tea. Now I'm sure you *must* be sick."

"No, I'm very well."

"Then I'm sure you must have something on your mind. O, now I have it, you must be in love; all young men are in love,"—and she smiled like a hippopotamus or a sea-lion—"an't you, now, Mr. Rainsford?"

"No, Mrs. Paddock, I'm not in love," said he, a little impatiently.

"Well, that's transcendent; not in love, and been a whole season living with Miss Phiginny Dangerfield! Well, I vow, that's mighty! Well then, I suppose—where was you *raised*, Mr. Rainsford?"

"She takes me for a blood-horse or a game-chicken, confound her!" thought he. "I was raised, madam, in the house of my father."

"No, sure! well, I declare now, I thought so. Where did he tarry, if I may be so bold?"

"In the land of the living once," said the young man, with a sigh.

"Ah! poor man! I thought so. When did he die, if I may be so curious?—Pshaw! I never did see such rotten thread as this!—but, as I was saying, when did the poor dear old gentleman die?" sighing and sniffling a little.

"Before I was born."

"Well, that's droll, I declare. I wish I had a pair of spectacles. I believe I'm losing my eyes."

"I wish you would lose your tongue," thought Rainsford.

"Did he leave a widow?"

"Yes, madam, he did."

"And children besides you?"

"Yes, yes, yes! I had once two brothers."

"No, sure! and what has gone with them all?"

"They are all dead!" exclaimed Rainsford, whose agitation now became excessive.

"Dead! now you don't say as much. I declare it's very droll. What did they all die of?"

"What I shall die of one day or other!" and the youth covered his face with his hands, while his bosom heaved with strong emotion.

"Ah! now don't take on so, now don't," said Mrs. Judith, coaxingly, for she was a good-natured woman, notwithstanding she carried the head of Holofernes on her shoulders; "don't take on so; it's dangerous to think too much of these things. I knew a Mrs. Fudgell once, that got out of her wits on account of an awakening, and killed her own little child, because, as she said afterwards, when she came to herself, a spell before she died, she thought an angel appeared to her, and told her she must do it. People often commit murder out of pure dumps, which turns their brains upside down. If you take on so, maybe you'll be tempted to commit murder, and—"

"Woman! woman!" cried Rainsford, "what are you talking of? Do you know—have you ever heard—but that is impossible! Some fiend has sent you here to torment me." His countenance was pale and haggard, his limbs quivering with the tension of agony, as he seized his hat, and darted out of the room towards the recesses of the forest.

"He—m—m! I reckon, I suspect that all is not right; I wouldn't have on my mind what that young man has for something!" and she went straight over to the classical academy to tell Zeno all about it.

But that worthy professor of birchen classics had got the start of her. He had seen Rainsford hurry out of the house and make for the wood; and, sliding from his three-legged stool, hast-

ened after him, impelled by an agony of curiosity, leaving his congregation of little boys and girls as it were without a shepherd, to their mischievous divertisements.

Rainsford buried himself in the obscurity of the forest, and wandered about till his agitation had somewhat subsided. He sat down upon the mouldering trunk of a majestic tree that had been overthrown by a whirlwind, and wiped the dew from his cold forehead.

"To what am I reserved at last?" said he; "I came hither into the wilderness in hope to escape the miserable degrading fate that hangs over me; to find some place where my name and all that concerns me was unknown; where the dreadful secret of my life might remain without disclosure till—till destiny itself revealed it! But it pursues me everywhere; the detestable babbling of this woman discloses it; the very air I breathe vibrates the chord of agony in my heart, and discloses it. Murder!—that I should ever become a murderer, as that prating woman hinted!" and he groaned in despair as he pronounced the word murderer.

Just at that moment he heard some one sneeze, and, rushing to the spot from whence it proceeded, encountered the veritable Master Zeno crouching behind a tree.

"What do you want here?" cried the young man, seizing him by the collar.

"I—I came to consult you about setting up my newspaper, sir. I was thinking—"

"You did! and I suppose you heard what I said just now?"

"Why, I confess, sir, I did hear the last part; for I assure you I just came up the moment I sneezed."

"Well, and what did you hear?"

"Why, sir, I, I thought—I'm not sure, but I thought I heard you talking something of escaping a degrading fate; of finding some place of refuge. I hope you're not tired of my house already. I'm sure my wife and I pay you all the attention in our power, and never leave you alone if we can help it. I really hope—"

"Pooh! what else did you hear?"

"Why, I might be mistaken—I dare say I was, but I thought I heard you say something about murder, or murderer, or some such matter. But understand me, sir; I don't mean to say I believe—that is to say—my dear sir, what do you think of my plan for setting up a newspaper?"

"Look you, Mr. Paddock, you have intruded upon my privacy, and overheard, or at least in part overheard, what I had rather die than have known or even suspected till—till it is too late to keep the secret. It will be known too soon for me, but, until then, I would wish you never to say any thing on the subject."

"O no, sir, by no means; I promise to keep it a perfect, a most profound secret, that you are a—that is to say—but what think you, sir, of my plan for setting up a newspaper?"

"Why," and Rainsford reflected a moment, "this I think, and this I promise you, that if you will solemnly swear—"

"What, on the Bible, sir?"

"No, solemnly pledge your welfare in this world and that which is to come, never to reveal, not even to your wife, not to any living soul or human ear, what you have this day seen and heard; I will furnish you with the means of establishing a newspaper at once."

"What! a weekly, or a daily?"

"Daily or hourly if you please."

"A daily!—a daily!" cried Zeno, rubbing his hands; "sir,—Mr. Rainsford,—I promise you solemnly not to open my lips sleeping or waking, alive or dead, on the subject of the mur—I mean on the subject—provided you enable me to set up a daily paper,—daily sir, daily, I think you said?"

"I did, and I'll keep my word; but if you break yours,—if I don't break every bone in your body, nay, drive the breath out of it for ever, say I'm a liar and a coward. Go home, and if I ever catch you dogging me again, I'll shoot you as sure as you're alive; look here," and he exhibited to the astonished eyes of Master Zeno Paddock a real genuine Joe Manton, that caused the man of letters to make himself scarce in the shortest possible time.

"Well! well! what did you see, what did you hear, what did you do?—now do tell me, Zeno, or I shall burst,—quick, quick, quick!" exclaimed Mrs. Judith, running out of breath to meet her lord; "now *do* tell me, I promise you I won't whisper a syllable to any living soul."

"You won't?" said Zeno, drily.

"No, not even to Mrs. Tupper."

"Well, that's right; and to make sure you'll keep your promise,—come here, Judy,—a word in your ear; I didn't hear, see, or do any thing, —now don't tell anybody, will you?"

Hereupon Mrs. Judith gave her lord and master a most irreverent box on the ear, which caused the bells to ring bob-majors therein. But he resolutely kept the secret, having the hope of the newspaper and the fear of Joe Manton before his

eyes, although sore were the struggles which rent his mind, and the temptations he resisted. So strong was the vocation of our classic to follow Rainsford in his wanderings, that he sometimes caught himself in the very act, and was obliged, as it were, to turn the outward man round by force, and set him going the other way. He considered it not, however, in the bond, to refrain from the inquisition within doors, and made himself amends for his abstinence by day, by peeping into his low chamber window ten times a night, and listening with all his ears. As for Mrs. Judith, she came to a resolution to drown herself, and was proceeding towards the river for that purpose, when her good angel whispered her that it was out of all nature for a person to keep a secret twenty-four hours, and that either Zeno had nothing to tell, or she would certainly know it in due time. Accordingly she returned home, and like a faithful helpmate set about cooking the good man's supper, which tradition says he ate with singular demonstration of satisfaction, mumbling between whiles, "A daily!—a daily! who'd have thought it; what a lucky rogue I am," until Mrs. Judith was seized with another acute fit of curiosity, which would have assuredly taken away her breath, had it not luckily set her tongue running like unto a mill-clapper.

When Master Zeno came to say his prayers, which he did every night, his conscience smote him sorely on the score of keeping such a horrible secret as that of which he had just possessed himself. But then his conscience weighed but a scruple or two, and the temptation to disregard its monitions weighed several pounds. There was the hope of reward and the fear of punishment

in this world, staked against the long reckoning of the future, and it is scarcely necessary to say which of the scales kicked the beam. Zeno behaved like a man of honour; he kept the secret, at the same time that he hinted to everybody in the village, not excepting his loving wife, that he knew enough of a certain person that should be nameless to hang him, as sure as his name was Zeno Paddock.

CHAPTER XVII.

Treating of what follows that which went before.

The persecutions of Mrs. Judith frequently drove Rainsford to seek repose, or at least relief, either in rambling through the woods, now showing forth all the desolation of winter, or at the fireside of Colonel Dangerfield, where he was always received with welcome by the ladies, and perfect civility by the colonel. Though he generally took his gun with him, it was observed he never brought home any game, and the Black Warrior frequently in his dry way advised him to procure some great medicine to make his rifle shoot straight. Mrs. Judith nearly distracted herself with wondering what under the sun could tempt a man into the forest in the depth of winter, except the prospect of killing something; and Bashfield laughed at him most unmercifully when he came over on a visit to Dangerfieldville. In short, Mr. Rainsford had the rare felicity of setting everybody wondering, and becoming an object of speculation to the whole village.

But there was one, and the fairest one of all, who felt somewhat more than curiosity about this young man, and that was Virginia Dangerfield. She was a high-spirited, imaginative young maiden, bred up amid the solitudes of nature, or at least without friends or companions of her own age and degree of refinement, and Rainsford was the first youth she had seen since the days

of her childhood, whose mind and attainments, feelings and pursuits, in any way harmonized with hers. Besides, there was something in the strong vicissitudes of temper he occasionally exhibited, such striking contrasts between the melancholy tones of his voice, the pallid hue of his cheek, the dark and gloomy tenor of his sentiments at times, and the gay, nay, almost wild vivacity he frequently indulged, until it almost approached to an appearance of artificial excitement, that was continually calling forth her wonder, her admiration, or her pity. Such a combination, it is generally believed, soon blends into one warmer sentiment in the heart of a young female; but as yet Virginia only cherished a strong feeling of sympathy towards this young man, blended with a strange, inscrutable, and fearful perception, she scarcely knew how or whence imbibed, which prevented that entire confidence which is the best foundation of virtuous love. When he was depressed and sad, she felt her heart drawn towards him irresistibly; but when he broke forth, as he sometimes did, into wild yet eloquent rhapsodies, bordering on incoherence; when his eyes sparkled and his cheeks glowed with a sort of wayward inspiration, she knew not why, but she could not sympathize with what seemed so unnatural.

His conduct to her also savoured of the inconsistencies which marked his general deportment. He frequently passed his mornings and evenings during the winter in her society, and in general his conversation was highly intellectual, as well as imaginative; but at times his mind would seem to fly off suddenly from the subject into a train apparently having no connexion with it,

and referable to no conceivable concatenation of ideas. For days in succession he would exhibit towards her a course of the most delicate unobtrusive attentions, which she was tempted to interpret as young maidens are wont; and then, perhaps, without warning, provocation, or apparent motive, absent himself voluntarily, or rather studiously avoid her. It is scarcely in human nature not to resent such wayward caprices, and Virginia repaid him, when, with as little seeming reason as he had for absenting himself, he returned again. Thus they went on, half-friends, half-lovers; at one time cool, at another cordial.

In the mean while, Mrs. Judith continued her system of espionage, and almost every day discovered something that nearly killed her with the pangs of curiosity. Master Zeno honourably kept his word to Rainsford, saving the exception we hinted at in the last chapter; and truth obliges us to disclose the fact, that he encouraged his wife to continue her investigations, by taking every occasion to laugh at her vague suspicions. She was "determined to convince him some day or other, that their lodger had something or other on his conscience that might better not be there." In pursuance of this praiseworthy resolution, she continued her attentions, and favoured Rainsford with her company so frequently of a morning, and indeed all day, that he was more than once on the point of leaving the village, and remaining until the spring invited him to take possession of his own house. But he knew not whither to go; he shrunk from the society of the world; the rivers were all frozen; travelling without roads through the forest was impracticable to all but an Indian or a backwoodsman; and besides all this,

Virginia Dangerfield was such a charming girl, so gentle in her manner towards him, with such wild yet tender eyes, and such a voice! "Her words fall from her lips as soft and as sweet as the honey trickles from the new honeycomb," said he; and so saying, he bit his thumb at Mrs. Judith Paddock, and bade defiance to the head of Holofernes.

One night, when all the village slept, Rainsford was pacing his chamber as was his custom. He managed to keep the foul fiend that haunted his imagination, at bay while the sun shone, and the passing show of the world was exhibiting before his eyes; but when night and silence came, and when all that charmed him away from himself was absent from his sight, the grinning spectre rose and besieged his pillow the moment he laid down his head. Then it was that the short intervals of unreal enjoyment, or rather of illusive rest, were paid for by hours of sleepless, restless, miserable anticipations. To escape these, he would weary himself by walking back and forth for hours and hours, until, weary and debilitated, he sought a troubled repose, in a sleep to which the habitual contemplation of his waking hours, gave a character of reflected horrors. Occasionally he stopped to look out at his window on the dead landscape, commanded by the rising ground on which the village was situated. Not a breath of air was stirring, not a sound was abroad; no whispering leaves, no chirping insects; nor katydid, nor tree-frog, nor any thing that breathed of life, seemed to exist at that moment save himself alone. The earth was wrapped in her white winding-sheet of snow, and reposing in the trance of temporary death. The dark forest which

bounded the view at a distance seemed to his harassed fancy the utmost verge of the world, the commencement of the region of oblivion, beyond which all is chaos, uncertainty, and of which nothing is assuredly known, until all knowledge is vain.

As he stood buried under a mass of thronging incongruities, all at once it seemed that the sun had risen at midnight, and cast his bright morning ray upon the dark woods. A ruddy glare illuminated, not only the trees, but the sky above them, gradually extending higher and higher, and wider and wider, and brightening in its expansion, until the stars waxed dim and the moonbeams disappeared. The state of his mind inclined Rainsford to superstitious influences, and, as he watched these appearances in strange and awful perplexity, it occurred to him to look at his watch. It was scarcely one o'clock. It was not the first blush of the morning; and what could it be but some apt and supernatural warning; some one of those mysterious messages of mighty changes or individual ills, which, like the long shadows of the trees when the sun declines to the western horizon, stretch far beyond reality, and distance the course of time? A single word awoke him from his dream.

The dismal cry of "Fire!" from a single hoarse voice at once conveyed to his mind the natural solution of the threatening omen. In an instant he was in the grass-grown street which divided the village, and at the same moment saw the flames breaking out from the roof of Colonel Dangerfield's mansion, which, being built of pine-wood, burnt almost with the rapidity of tinder. Not a soul was stirring as yet but himself and the

person who had given the alarm, and from the total silence within, it was evident that none of the family were as yet awakened. Rainsford's first impulse was to knock violently at the door and call aloud. But it would seem that we miserable short-sighted mortals never sleep so sound as when the thief is abroad or the house on fire. No one answered, no one appeared, and the flames were gaining strength at every instant. A thought struck him, and running round to the side of the house where Virginia slept, he threw a large stone at her window, which broke two or three panes of glass, and scattered them about the room. The noise awoke her; she ran to the window, and demanded what was the matter.

"For the sake of your life," cried Rainsford, "ask no questions; the house is on fire, and every soul in it seems dead or asleep. Quick, quick, Virginia, or you are lost—I beseech you lose not a moment."

Virginia disappeared, and Rainsford hastened to receive her at the front door, which he found had been at length opened by Littlejohn, who stood, as villagers are wont to stand on occasions that so seldom occur, without knowing what to do, or which way to turn himself. The rest of the family gathered around him, with the exception of Colonel Dangerfield, who had gone the evening before to attend to some magisterial business at the county-town, some twenty miles off, and of Virginia, who had not yet made her appearance.

"Thank God!" exclaimed Rainsford, "you are all safe." Here he looked round, and found Virginia was not there.

"Where is Miss Dangerfield?" cried he, and

rushed into the house. The chamber of Virginia was at the extremity of the hall of the second story, which ran the whole length of the house; and Rainsford discovered, to his horror, that the staircase which led to it was in flames. At the head of the stairs he thought he could distinguish a white figure stretched at full length, and apparently insensible. He sprang three steps upwards, but the flames dashed in his face, and sent him back again. Again he made a desperate effort, but suffocation drove him once more to the foot of the stairs. By this time Mrs. Dangerfield and the rest of the family, with a crowd of villagers, were drawn to the spot, and saw the white victim of the flames lying as before described. The mother was held by force from rushing to her relief, and at length, overcome by her feelings, fainted, and was carried away insensible. At this moment Virginia recovered sufficient animation to rise, and sufficient recollection to be aware of her situation. A third time Rainsford attempted the ascent, and returned with his hair in a blaze.

"Fly to your chamber-window—fly—fly!" cried he, almost suffocated with heat, smoke, and agitation.

"I cannot fly!" exclaimed Virginia, faintly, and sunk down, to all appearance never to rise again, save when all the human race arise. The flames now approached the fair and gentle victim, whose hours seemed fast drawing to instants of time, and silent dismay and total inaction succeeded the noise and bustle of the preceding scene.

At the last decisive moment a sudden thought seemed to revive Rainsford from the leaden stupor which his excessive yet abortive exertions had

cast upon his mind and body. Pails of water had been brought in by the villagers in the vain hope of arresting the progress of the flames, and various articles of household furniture were thrown about the lower entry. Among these was a large damask table-cloth, a relic of the ancient glory of the Dangerfield dynasty, which Rainsford seized, dipped in the water, threw it over his head, darted up the staircase, which yet hung together, and, seizing the lifeless body of Virginia, found his way blindfold down again, with little injury to himself or the young lady, whom he tenderly sheltered under the wet damask, which was almost scorched to a cinder ere he had performed the perilous feat. But a few moments were consumed in the transactions we have just related; and scarcely had the safety of Virginia been achieved, when the roof fell in, and the crowd was obliged to leave the mansion to its fate.

Virginia was carried by Rainsford, in a state of utter insensibility, to a neighbouring house, whither her mother had been taken, and where she now remained in perfect distraction of mind. The sight of her daughter, however, soon brought her to herself; but it remained doubtful whether Virginia would ever revive. The long time she had remained in her swoon, and the heat and smoke in which she was enveloped, had apparently for ever quenched the vital spark; and for many an anxious moment all exertions to awaken it only strengthened a conviction that all was vain. Twice did they abandon the attempt, all except the mother, whose insurmountable affection seemed to produce a prophetic reliance on the eventual triumph of human means, aided by the

blessing of Omnipotence. She still persisted, and her perseverance was at length rewarded. Slowly, and as if, like Lazarus, she was awaking from the tomb, and casting off the chains of Death himself, Virginia revived to consciousness, and the spell of suspended animation was finally broken. By degrees she came to her recollection, and, casting her eyes towards the smoking ruins, threw herself into the arms of her mother, exclaiming, "My father can build a new house; but if I had lost thee, my mother, where should I find another like thee?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

A great discovery of Mrs. Judith Paddock; to wit, that this is a most scandalous and wicked world.

THERE are certain conceited moralists, or philosophers, if so please ye, and certain affected sentimentalists, who profess to consider life and all its blessings, a boon not worth receiving, not worth possessing, and not worth our thanks to the great Giver. In the pride of fancied superiority, they pretend to look with calm contempt on the struggles, the pursuits, the enjoyments of their fellow-creatures, and to hold themselves aloof from such a petty warfare for petty objects. They undervalue the enjoyments, they exaggerate the sufferings of the human race, and indirectly impeach the mercy of Providence, in having created countless millions of human beings only to increase the sum of misery in this world.

But, for our part, we hold no communion with such men, whether they are sincere or not; nor do we believe for one single moment—except, peradventure, when suffering a twinge of the tooth-ache—that the good-hearted, well-disposed inhabitants of this world, take them by and large, do not on the whole enjoy more than they suffer even here, where it would seem from these philosophers and sentimentalists there is as little distribution of infinite justice as there is dispensation of infinite mercy. What though there are intervals of sorrow, disap-

pointment, remorse, agony, if you will, mingled in the cup of existence, that man must be very wretched indeed who, in looking back upon his course, cannot count far more hours of enjoyment than of suffering. We deceive ourselves perpetually, and there is nothing which we exaggerate more than the ordinary calamities of others, until the truth is brought home to ourselves by being placed in the same situation.

When mankind appear to be plunged in the very waters of bitterness, without hope or consolation, they are not, after all, so wretched as might be imagined by the young and inexperienced. Melancholy, grief, nay, even despair can find a strange pleasure in unlimited self-indulgence. The good Being who gives the wound seems to have provided a remedy to soften its pangs, by ordaining that the very grief which dwelleth in the innermost heart should be mixed with some rare ingredients that sweeten or alleviate the bitter draught. In his extremest justice, he seems to remember mercy; and while he strikes, he spares. Amid clouds and darkness there is still an unextinguished light; in storms and tempests there floats a saving plank; amid the deepest wo there is a sad luxury in giving way without restraint to tears; in calling to mind again and again the lost object of our affections, summing up the extent of our irretrievable loss, and pouring into our own wounds the balm of our own pity.

Happiness consists in a quiet series of almost imperceptible enjoyments that make little impression on the memory. Every free breath we draw is an enjoyment; every thing beautiful in nature or art is a source of enjoyment; memory, hope, fancy, every faculty of the intellect of man is a

source of enjoyment; the flowers, the fruits, the birds, the woods, the waters, the course, the vicissitudes, and the vast phenomena of nature, created, regulated, and preserved by the mighty hand of an omnipotent Being, all are legitimate and reasonable sources of enjoyment, within the reach of every rational being. Death is indeed the lot of all, and all should yield a calm obedience to the law of nature when the hour shall come. But a fretful impatience or an affected contempt of life, is as little allied to philosophy as to religion.

Such being our view of the subject, we are rather inclined to admire than to blame Virginia for being grateful to Rainsford for the preservation of a life as yet unstained by guilt or unblighted by suffering. The gift, and the manner of bestowing it, touched her to the soul, and, co-operating with former predispositions in his favour, produced a feeling so exquisitely tender, that if it was not love, it certainly was not friendship. Perhaps it partook of both, and in all probability it had more of the former than of the latter. As it was, however, it communicated a touching character to her speech, her actions, and—shall we confess it?—to her looks, when she sometimes watched with a newly-awakened interest those sudden changes of temper, those wild sallies of imagination, which she fancied waxed more and more frequent. The inconsistencies of his conduct also became every day more marked, and if he at one time was little less than a lover, he would at another become little less than rude and neglectful. Yet with all this, there was more, far more of the appearance of being irresistibly impelled by necessity than of acting under the influence of wanton caprice. It was evident that

grief, or some feeling allied to it, was at the root of all his eccentricities.

The morning after the fire a messenger was sent for Colonel Dangerfield, who returned in the evening. In the warmth of his gratitude for the preservation of his daughter, he thanked Rainsford with all his heart, and for a while every vestige of his former coolness disappeared. But though his conduct continued such as would have satisfied a stranger that the young man was a prime favourite, still Rainsford *felt* that the colonel was rather striving to repay an obligation than giving way to a spontaneous feeling of kindness. "He has heard or he suspects the secret reason of my flying from my home," whispered the apprehensive conscience of the unfortunate wanderer; and his first impulse was to rid him of his presence for ever, by departing as he came. But still he remained spellbound by an influence which every day became stronger, and every hour added something to the burthen he bore.

A few days sufficed for the erection of a new mansion in the room of that which had been burnt. The good villagers resorted to what, in woodland phrase, is called "log-rolling," which means a combined effort of many to do that which is either difficult or impossible to one. They gathered together and built the colonel a house, but it was a sad falling off from the other; being simply constructed of logs, after the manner of a primitive settlement; where, there being no saw-mills, the only resource is to take the whole tree, or "go the whole hog," as they say in "Old Kentuck." Nor could they boast much of their furniture, great part of that in the old house having been destroyed. But the spring was approaching,

the colonel had ample funds to build and furnish a house equal to the one he had lost, and they were content to wait. Indeed, we have observed, that not only do people who have the means of any gratification in their power exhibit less eagerness for its enjoyment; but it is equally true, that those who have once possessed the luxuries of wealth, generally submit to their loss with a much better grace than people who have never known any other state, endure the pressure of poverty. The reason is, that the former have had experience of how little real value are mere superfluities in the cup of happiness, while the latter view them through the exaggerated medium of their imagination.

The family was settled in the new log-palace, and matters going on in the usual jog-trot way, when one morning Mrs. Judith Paddock, having been on the watch for some time, saw the coast clear, and sallied forth across the way to pay a visit to Miss Virginia Dangerfield, whom she found, as she wished, alone. That young lady did not much covet the society of Mrs. Judith, but it was a rule of the house never to refuse either hospitality or politeness to any but the worthless. The good woman was accordingly received with due kindness, and invited to sit down. For some time she talked of matters and things in general; then she came to particulars; condoled with Virginia on the burning of the house; congratulated her on her escape, and finally uttering a deep sigh, stopped her everlasting tongue for a moment.

"What is the matter, Mrs. Paddock?" said Virginia.

"Ah!—heigho!—this is a wicked world."

"It has indeed rather an indifferent reputation, but what induced you to make the remark just now?"

"Ah!—heigho!" And here she smoothed her white apron. "It's a scandalous world, a very scandalous world. I could tell such things—but I'd rather cut out my tongue than scandalize any human being, not even so much as a nigger."

Virginia knew the good Mrs. Judith had something on her mind, but determined not to be accessary to bringing it forth. Perhaps she knew enough of her to know that she would hear it without. Mrs. Judith sighed, and smacked her lips again.

"Ah! who'd have thought it, who'd have thought it—such a nice young man!"

"Who, Mrs. Paddock, your husband?" said Virginia, smiling.

"No, indeed, Miss Phiginny. Ah! he's another guess sort of a man. But what a shocking pity it is. Heigho! it's a scandalous, a wicked world this."

"Have you just found that out, Mrs. Paddock?"

"No, indeed, I'm not quite such a fool, Miss Phiginny; but I've found out something else."

"Ah!" Virginia was just going to ask what, but checked herself, determined to be innocent of every thing except listening. Again Mrs. Judith sighed, and shook her ambrosial curls.

"Ah! what a nice young man that Mr. Rainsford seems to be. I talk to him sometimes for hours, and he don't interrupt me a single word. O! he's a nice young man. But—heigho!—what a wicked world we live in."

Virginia began to fidget a little, and it was just

on the tip of her tongue to inquire what Mrs. Judith meant. But she only blushed.

"To be sure, he saved your life, they say. But, heigho!—mercy knows, if all I heard is true, it was the least thing he could do to make up for the life he took."

"What! woman—Mrs. Paddock—what do you say? What are you going to say?"

"Ah! its such a scandalous world—heigho!—such a wicked world, that I'd rather not tell what I know, if it wasn't that I think it my bounden duty to you and the colonel."

Virginia now trembled in spite of herself, and demanded at once all the woman knew. Mrs. Paddock drew her chair closer to her side, and began in an under tone, ever and anon looking around cautiously.

"You must know, Miss Phiginny, that though I like to find out what is going on here in the village, its only that I may keep it a secret from everybody. Especially, you know it's my business to know all about people that live in our house, else they might be horse-thieves or *murderers*;"—and she emphasised the word;—"and I be never the better for it. So I think it my duty to keep an eye upon them, and if I see or hear any thing suspicious, why, I follow it up, until, I warrant you, I ferret it out, somehow or other. Well," and here she drew her chair closer to Virginia, who turned pale at this awful preface. "Well, I somehow, I hardly can tell how, for I assure you I never listened at his keyhole, or—or—peeped in at his window, I often saw Mr. Rainsford, if his name is indeed Rainsford, in great distress; and heard him groan late at night, and walk across the floor. Well, putting odds

and ends together, says I to myself, says I, 'I, that young man hasn't got something on his mind that hadn't ought to be there, my name isn't Judith Squires,' that's my maiden-name, Miss. 'And,' says I, 'it's my duty to find it out, that I may keep it a secret from everybody like, you know.'"

"Well, well, go on, Mrs. Paddock. Let me know the worst."

"Ah! bad enough in all conscience, Miss Phiginny. Well, you see, I kindly, you know, turned the conversation upon different sorts of wickedness,—ah! this is a wicked world!—just to see if I could find out something from his looks, or words, or actions, you know. Well, I talked about stealing horses; and how the regulators served a horse-thief once; they tied him to a tree and whipped him. But I couldn't see any thing that looked like a guilty conscience; and so another time I told him of a man that robbed a traveller who was coming to buy land, and had his pocket-book full of money, but he looked as innocent-like as a child. And so I went on, talking of all sorts of bad things, without stirring his conscience at all, as I could see. When, one day—ah! this is a wicked world!—one day, it was yesterday three weeks, I believe. Yes, it *was* yesterday three weeks. I happened to be telling him about Mrs. Fudgell, poor soul, who, you know, went mad with religion, the year before last, and killed her child, you know. Well, if he didn't jump up as if he had been shot, and he cried out, 'What, murder her own child! Oh God! Oh God! that ever I was born for such misery!' and he snatched his hat and ran out of the room as if the sheriff had been after him. Now, putting all these things together,—Heigho!

If this was not such a scandalous world, I should say that Mr. Rainsford had—"

"What?" shrieked Virginia.

"The weight of blood on his conscience. I saw a man hanged once for murder that looked as much like him as two peas."

The idea was too horrible, and yet there certainly was something in his conduct, altogether strange, mysterious, and inexplicable. But Virginia thrust the grinning fiend suspicion from her with a mighty effort, and looking, with a pale countenance of severity at Mrs. Judith, warned her solemnly against indulging or uttering such ridiculous slanders. She summoned all her powers of reasoning to convince her of the utter improbability of such a man being stained with such a crime; she held up to her view the cruelty of imputing such deep guilt to a stranger, whose conduct since his residence among them had been kind, benevolent, and praiseworthy, in every respect; and she drew from Mrs. Judith a promise that she would never tell to any other human being what she had just disclosed to her. "As for me," cried Virginia, "I would as soon suspect my father."

"Yes, and so would I. But ah! heigho!—it's a very wicked and scandalous world this."

Mrs. Judith took her leave, and Virginia remained buried in the gloom of a painful, melancholy revery long after her departure.

CHAPTER XIX.

Showing how little reason one generation hath to laugh at another.

The evening of the day on which the foregoing interview took place Rainsford spent at the house of Colonel Dangerfield. He was more than usually elevated in the early part of the visit, and surprised as well as charmed them all, with the knowledge and intelligence he displayed. He sketched the manners and fashions of the day with spirit, mingled with no little spice of satire, and exhibited a perfect knowledge of the subject. It was evident that he had mixed with the great world, and Colonel Dangerfield was pleased at an opportunity of recalling his own recollections of the early part of his life.

"And is it possible," said Virginia, "that the young children dress like old people, and the old people like young children?"

"It is true, I assure you. I have often walked behind a lady in the street, whom I took for one in the bloom of youth, she was so bedizened with flounces and flowers, and quickened my pace to get a sight of her face; when lo, and behold, it turned out to be that of a grandmother."

"Well, I suppose the elderly gentlemen are more discreet?"

"Why, I can't say much in their favour. For aught I saw, they were as much inclined to outrage nature and propriety as the venerable old

ladies. The dandies of threescore were as plenty as the belles of a certain age, and emulated that deportment which, though it constitutes the charm of youth, is the reproach of old age."

"And the poor little children?"

"Ay, the poor little children, you may well call them. If you could only see the figures their mistaken parents make of them, you'd scarcely know whether they were premature old ladies, or premature young ones. They are absolutely crippled with finery, so that all the grace and vivacity of youth is smothered under a load of many-coloured trumpery, and they waddle along like so many little caricatures of the pigmy race. I declare to you that nothing is more common than to see a little girl of three years old going to school with her hair in papers."

"O, now I am sure you are jesting?"

"No, indeed, Miss Dangerfield, it is quite impossible for me to do justice to the masquerade figures you see in the fashionable promenade of a fashionable city, at the fashionable hour when the fashionable people are abroad. They seem dressed, not for walking, but for an assembly; they appear to forget that good taste is nothing else than good sense applied to a particular object; and that every thing which impedes the freedom of the person must be essentially unbecoming and ungraceful."

"From what you say, dress must be the reigning foible of the age."

"It is indeed, and, what is still worse, it is no longer possible to distinguish people by their dress, for all dress alike, from the mistress to the maid from the parlour to the kitchen."

"How ridiculous and absurd!" exclaimed Virginia.

"Why so ridiculous and absurd?" asked the colonel, who had been attending to the conversation without joining in it.

"Why, my dear father, is it not palpably ridiculous and absurd for people to dress all alike when their situations are all different?"

"Not if they have the means of doing so without sacrificing what is of more consequence than outward appearance. If the mistress dress like an opera-dancer, it would be hard to prevent the maid from making a fool of herself too."

"But, sir," said Rainsford, "ought not every person to dress according to their means and occupations?"

"O, certainly, always according to their means, and agreeably to their occupations when they are engaged in them. But on Sundays and holydays, when all are gentlemen and ladies, if the industrious tradesman, or the industrious man or maid-servant, purchase a suit of broadcloth or a silken gown, faith I don't see that anybody has a right to complain, provided they have the means and the honesty to pay for it."

"But, sir, to dress in all the preposterous extravagance of the fashion!"

"Well, the fault is in the preposterous extravagance of the fashion, and in those who set the example, not those who follow it. The young imitate the elder and wiser, the child copies the parent, and the lower classes always look up to the higher. All these last have to do is to set them a good example, instead of complaining that they follow a bad one."

"But don't you think the universal propensity

of all classes of people, high and low, in this country, to indulgence of every kind, a great evil?"

"Perhaps I do; but we must bear in mind that superfluity is the parent of extravagance. When civilized people are restricted in their means to the narrow circle of the actual wants of nature, they will necessarily be economical; but when, by the exercise of any ordinary trade or occupation, they can earn more than this, the surplus constitutes either a fund for saving or a fund for spending. In this country every man can, if he pleases, earn more than is requisite for the purposes of mere necessity. It is the boast and the blessing of us all that this is the case. But all sublunary blessings have their drawbacks; we must take the evil with the good, and compound for a disposition to luxury and extravagance in the lower orders, on the score of the universal diffusion of competency among all classes."

"I never saw such caricatures," exclaimed Virginia, looking at some milliners' costumes which Rainsford happened to have brought with him as curiosities; "look here, sir—only do look here, mother!"

Mrs. Dangerfield laughed, as well she might; and Virginia continued to declare that never was any thing so absurd as the dresses of the little children.

"Come here, Virginia," said her father, taking her hand, and leading her opposite to where hung a picture, which had been rescued from the flames of the old mansion by the piety of the great Pompey Ducklegs, and which exhibited the precise effigies and suits of a little boy and girl in the age of bag wigs, mighty cuffs, high-quartered shoes, hoop petticoats, whalebone stays, and lofty head-

gear; "look there, Virginia; and I beg of you to refrain from committing the indecorum of laughing at your grandfather, when I tell you that at the age of twelve years he wore that identical wig, that veritable buckram coat with sheet-iron skirts, that mortal pair of cuffs, those indescribable indispensables, and that most formidable sword of most formidable length. The little girl—but don't laugh at her, Virginia; she was thy great-aunt, and thou art her namesake. She died the year you were born—but the subject is a melancholy one. What think you of a young gentleman and lady of fourscore years ago, compared with their successors of the present day?"

"Why, really, sir, it seems to me that if the present day has gained nothing, it has lost nothing in the way of dressing little children."

"You say true, my dear; those who talk about one age being essentially wiser and better than another talk little less than sheer nonsense. Human nature, while it approaches perfectibility on one hand, recedes from it on the other; where it gains on the right, it loses on the left, like our great river Mississippi, which tears away its banks only to form a new deposite at its mouth: thus creating a new world in the ocean from the spoils of the old. Every succeeding age is only a new edition of the past."

"With *improvements?*" said Rainsford.

"With *alterations* in the binding rather than the contents, I doubt. And now, my dear, as the vicar of Wakefield said, 'Go help your mother make the goose-pie.'" The young damsel accordingly left the room to pursue her domestic avocations.

"Whoop!" exclaimed a voice without, which they all recognised as that of Bushfield.

"Come in, come in," cried the colonel.

"Come in! why, ain't I in?" exclaimed he, as he entered in a great flurry, and seated himself. "What a race I've had. I'll be goy blamed if I haven't bin trying to catch this squirrel—a fair chase, and no favours asked. There we were at rip *and* tuck, up one tree and down another. He led me a dance all the way from kingdom come till I got just by the village here; and what do you think? I had to shoot the trifling cretur after all. He got up on the top of the highest tree *pre*haps you ever *did* see; so I let him have it, just for being so obstinate."

"An excellent shot," said the colonel; "you've hit him in the eye, I see."

"O no, it isn't, but I was mad; no, no, it's a disgraceful shot—what I call a full huckleberry below a persimmon; for when I want the skin of one of these fellers, I always shoot a *leetle* before his nose, and then the wind of the ball takes the varmint's breath clean away, and I don't hurt the fur."

"You must have had some practice," said Rainsford.

"I'll be goy blamed if you wouldn't think so, if you only knew me as well as I know my old rifle."

"I should like to go out with you one of these times, if there is good sport in your part of the world."

"I don't know what *you* call good sport," cried Bushfield, who had now got on his hobby, "but I partly conceit if you had been with me one day last fall you'd have thought so. I saw a deer

and its fawn across a creek the other side of the mountain, and I wasn't altogether slow in letting fly, I tell you. The ball ranged them both. I had to wade through the creek, *and* I found the ball had entered in a hollow tree, after going right clean through the two deer, where there was a hive of honey, *and* the honey was running away like all natur; so I stooped down to pick up something to stop it, when I put my hand on a rabbit hid under a great toadstool. But somehow or other, coming across the creek, my trousers had got so full of fish, that one of the buttons burst clean off, *and* I will agree to be eternally derned if it didn't hit a wild turkey right in the left eye. Whoop! *ain't* I a horse?"

"A whole team, I should think," said Rainsford, highly amused with the eccentric rhodomontade of the woodman. Virginia happening at this moment to enter, he addressed her with a good-humoured kind of audacity,—

"You neat little varmint, have you got any thing for supper? for may I be lost in a canebrake, as I once was when I first came to these parts, if I ain't transcendently hungry. I could eat like all wrath."

Supper was brought in, and Bushfield made "a most transcendent supper." The company continued sitting round the table enjoying this little social meal, which was once the evening tattoo that brought all the family together, but which is now elbowed out of the circle of domestic economy into drawing-rooms and saloons, and might rather be called the morning breakfast than the evening supper. Virginia, who had a mischievous little female relish for humour, and who could enter into that of Bushfield, which, indeed, though

odd and extravagant, had nothing in it partaking of vulgarity, took occasion to question him as to the particulars of the story of his being lost in the cane-brake to which he had alluded.

"Well, I know you want to have a laugh at me; but howsomever, I don't so much mind being laughed at by a woman, and so I'll tell you the story for all that; and you may laugh anyhow, as you're not a man. I was out after a bear that had been about my hut several nights, and he led me such a dance! I wasn't such a keen hand at finding my way then, and at last I got into a cane-brake along the river, where the canes stood so thick, I wish I may be shot if you could put the leetle eend of a small needle between them without spectacles. Well, I was ripping and tearing away to get out, but only got deeper and deeper in the plaguy place; when all at once I heard the queerest noise I ever came across in all my days, though I've heard a pretty considerable variety, and I then thought I knew all the notes of the varmints, from the growl of a bear to the screech of a panther. But I could make nothing of this, and began to keep a sharp look out, which was hardly worth while, for I couldn't see to the end of my eyelashes, the canes were so transcendent close together. Well, I cut *and* slashed about, and every now and then heard the queer noise; at last it was so close to me, that I pricked my ears and cocked my gun, to be ready to take keer of myself in case of risk. Well, as I kept on ripping and tearing about, at last I came smack on the drollest-looking thing, prehaps, you ever laid your eyes on. It sat all in a heap, like the feller that found sixpence apenny in a place, with its head down below its shoulders, and its hair all

hanging about like the beard of a buffalo bull. 'Whoop!' said I; and the varmint raised its head, when I wish I may be shot if it didn't turn out a real he Ingen.

"'Hullo!' said I, 'what trade are you carrying on here, friend?' but I must say I had a mind to shoot the feller, though I hadn't then the same cause I have now to hate the varmints. However, I thought I'd first see whether he'd make battle or no; so I waited to hear what he had to say. But when I spoke to him, all he did was to grin and growl just like a lame bear. 'I say now, stranger,' says I, 'what may you be about here?'—'R—r—r—r!' said he, and grinned like a monkey. 'Well then,' said I, 'if you don't choose to tell what you're about, maybe, prehaps, you will tell where you happened to come from?' 'R—r—r—r!' said the varmint again. 'Well then, prehaps you'll tell me where you are going?' 'R—r—r—r!' I began to be a little mad, and had a transcendent mind to shoot him; but somehow or other I held back, until I came up and took hold of his shoulder, and shook him like a bottle of bitters; when I wish I may be goy blamed if he didn't spring up higher than the top of the cane-brake, *and* give a great whoop, *and* scamper off like a flash of lightning. I followed the trail he made; it led me down to the river. Then I knew where I was, *and* I was so pleased with the cretur for showing me the way, that, somehow or other kindly, I couldn't harm him, and he got off clear that time, anyhow."

"I'm glad of that," said Virginia; "it would have been barbarous to hurt the poor creature."

"I don't know," returned the other; "for it turned out he was a crazy Ingen, that was let run

about by his tribe, because these people have a sort of superstitious respect for such characters. I afterwards heard he got into a white station when the men were away, and murdered two or three women and children. I only wish I had known what was to happen, and may I be eternally condemned to live in a big city like Lexington if I wouldn't have winged him, if he had been as mad as a buffalo bull that has had a rifle-ball flattened against his forehead."

No one but Virginia noticed that during the latter part of this story Rainsford laboured under a suppressed agitation, which he strove to conceal with all his might. But when Bushfield came to the catastrophe, the arm which the young man had thrown over the back of her chair trembled so violently as to communicate to it a tremulous motion, which thrilled to her very heart. As if by a violent effort, he rose, and, scarcely bidding good night, departed abruptly. That night Virginia lay for hours thinking of the tale of Mrs. Judith Paddock, and sometimes coming to a conclusion which alternately thrilled her with a dry and parching horror, or wetted her pillow with tears.

CHAPTER XX.

"How sweet in the woodlands."

THE morning opened brightly, and the sun shone with a newly-awakened warmth that indicated the gradual approaches of spring. Its balmy influence chased away the dark shadows which the midnight fancy conjures up in silence and obscurity, and the vague horrors which had beset the pillow of Virginia vanished like spectres at the dawn of day. Few that have traced the map of their own minds but must have been struck with the different views and feelings which govern the different periods of the day, and remarked how often the decisions of the pillow are reversed by the hurry, the bustle, the excitements, and temptations of the busy, sprightly morning. Imagination is the queen of darkness; night the season of her despotism. But daylight, by presenting a thousand objects to the eye, the hearing, and the touch, restores the empire of the senses, and, from being the sport of fancy, we become the slaves of realities.

Rainsford did not make his appearance at the house of Colonel Dangerfield for several days after his abrupt exit as recorded in the last chapter. He accompanied Bushfield on a visit to his hermitage, under pretence of taking lessons in hunting, but in reality partly to escape the prying curiosity, the sociable visits of Mrs. Judith, and partly from the apprehensive timidity of his mind,

which suggested to him that he had made himself conspicuous by his emotions on the occasion to which we have before alluded.

The habitation of this Indian white man, as the savages called him, was simply a log cabin, the appurtenances of which were barely sufficient for the purposes of eating and sleeping. The forest supplied him with food, such as is considered the most delicate among the disciples of luxury; the skins of the deer and the bear furnished him with bed and clothing; his rifle was his purse; his powder and shot his ready cash; for they afforded him the medium of exchange for every thing which they did not themselves enable him to procure in the surrounding forest. Bushfield never rode, it made him so tired, he said; and Rainsford was heartily fatigued when they came upon the solitary cabin, after scouring the woods in their way. His companion was frequently obliged to wait for him, and very often he would have been inevitably lost in the mazes of the trackless wild, had not the Indian whoop of his companion served to recall him from his wanderings. He had been induced to take a rifle with him, but sorely repented his temerity, for its weight wearied him at length almost beyond endurance; besides, though they met plenty of game, it so happened that Rainsford always missed, while the other never failed. No man likes to be outdone, even in what he does not value himself upon; and no man, perhaps, cordially respects another who is totally ignorant of that in which he himself excels. Bushfield sometimes got a little out of patience with Rainsford, and Rainsford often envied Bushfield his skill in the rifle. In the crowded city such an accomplishment would have been

beneath his attention, but in the forest it was held the standard of manhood.

"Stranger," said Bushfield, on occasion of the other missing a squirrel which was crouching at the summit of a tree of moderate height, and which had been resigned to him as an easy shot; "stranger, I reckon you haven't had the advantage of being raised in the woods, anyhow; why, I could have brought down that squirrel with both eyes shut, let alone one."

"No; I had the misfortune to be brought up in a city, where nobody carries a gun, except the militia."

"Nobody carry a gun! why, what do they carry then, a dirk?"

"No; the young gentlemen sometimes carry a switch about as thick as my little finger."

"A switch! why, what would they do now, supposing they were to come right face to face with a bear or an Ingen? what a mighty figure they'd cut."

"Yes; but there are neither bears nor Indians to fear."

"Sure that's true enough; for I remember when I went home to North Carolina, to see the old place, I'll be shot if there wasn't a little varmint of a town built right smack on the spot that used to be one of the best deer stations in the whole country. I couldn't stand that, no, that was too bad, so I cut a stick and made tracks, and came back to my old range; but they won't let a feller alone where he has plenty of elbow-room, and I begin to think of leaving here soon, and carrying a trail across the Mississippi, anyhow."

"Why so?"

"Why, I'll tell you, stranger. It's getting too dense hereabouts."

"Dense?"

"Yes; the people are getting too close together, they han't elbow-room. Why, do you know there's a feller has had the impudence to locate himself over yonder, within three miles of me. I saw the smoke of his chimney the other morning, and heard a strange dog bark; so I tracked the feller, and put it to him if he wasn't ashamed to come and disturb a man in this unneighbourly manner. Bym-by, says I to him, a man won't have room to turn round here without hitting somebody's elbow, and the upshot of the business is, that either you or I must cut a stick and quit this hunting-ground, or I'll see if I can't make you, anyhow."

"Well, and did he cut a stick?"

"Not he, the rantanckerous squatter! he said he had as good a right there as any bear or wolf that ever broke bread; as good as I had, that have been in possession here ever since old Rogers Clarke licked the Ingens so beautifully. I'm a considerable old feller now, and followed close on the trail of old Boone, and it's a mighty pretty piece of nonsense if I han't a right to the country about here, as much as I can throw a stick at; and I wish I may be dragged head foremost through a thorn-bush, if this interloper sha'n't clear out pretty considerably in a hurry, or I'll be down upon him like all wrath, anyhow. I'd as good a mind as I ever had to shoot a wild deer, to have a fight with him off the reel, and settle the right of soil at once; but then I bethought myself he might listen to reason some other time,

and so I told him I'd give him till next month to make tracks, or make up his mind to get a most almighty licking, if nothing else. But whoop!" cried he, in a wild voice, that rung through the woods, and roused the inmates of a rude cabin, consisting of a litter of puppies and an old black woman, with hair as white as snow, who came out to welcome their master.

"Well, here we are, old Snowball," cried Bushfield, who seemed delighted to get home; "here we are, and I don't think there's many such places as this betwixt here and kingdom come. Come in, come in, stranger, you're right welcome; but there's no use in telling a man what everybody knows, anyhow."

Old Mammy Phillis,—that was the pastoral name of Bushfield's housekeeper,—was one of those unaccountable creatures, as he called her, who, with the appearance of age and decrepitude, are capable of undergoing great labour and fatigue. Like old ricketty machines, they seem to keep going from the mere force of habit, long after the parts which compose them are dislocated or worn out.

"Come, come, mammy, stir these old stumps of yours, and get us something to eat; I'm as hungry as a whole team of horses. What have you got to treat us with, hey?"

"Sum deér meat, massa."

"Well, cook us a steak, in less than no time. That old sinner is the plague of my life," continued Bushfield, "I wish I'd bin swamped in the Mississippi before I was fool enough to bring her here. I find there's no such thing as being one's own master as long as a man has any company about him. He's like a nail in a piece of timber;

he can't move one way nor t'other, and there he sticks as straight as a pine-tree, till he grows rusty and drops out. I never could find out how you manage to live without doing just what you like and going where you please, anyhow. For my part, stranger, I can't fetch my breath anywhere except in all out-doors, and had sooner lay down on a bed of leaves with a sky blanket, than sleep on one of your hard feather-beds, that pretty nigh break a man's bones. I wish I may be hoppled all my life to come, if I didn't once get within a huckleberry of being smothered to death in one of them beds with curtains all round 'em. Catch me there agin, and I'll give you leave to curry-comb me, anyhow. How under the sun do you make out to live in such a queer way, stranger?"

"Custom familiarizes us, and then the pleasures of society make amends for the want of perfect freedom of action."

"Society! I'd as soon think of getting used to be handcuffed, or hoppled, as we do our horses to keep 'em from straying away in the woods. There's nothing I ever did in all my life that I wish the d—l had me so much for doing, as bringing that old Snowball home here; for somehow or other, I've never rightly had my own way since she came. The cretur is always in my way, and sometimes I catch her great goggle eyes set upon me, so that I seem tied fast to my seat, and altogether am as good as a nigger myself."

"Well, but I suppose you have your own way for all that?"

"Have my own way! what d'ye take me for, stranger? wasn't I born, no, not born, but raised in Old Kentuck; and d'ye think I wouldn't have

my way and my say, if an earthquake stood on one side and a flash of lightning on the other, and crossed their arms right before me, as much as to say, stand where you are? But a man may have his own way, and yet somehow or other not do just as he pleases after all."

"I don't see exactly how."

"No? well then, I'll split the log for you. See here now, what I call having my own way, is doing a thing in spite of what other people may say or do to prevent me; and what I call doing as I please, is to have nobody to come about me and put on their wise airs, and tell me I'd better not, or I shall repent, or I'd wish some day or other I'd took their advice; and worry and fret a feller's soul into a knot-hole, so that when he does take his own way at last, he wabbles about like a broad-horn in an eddy, instead of shooting right straight ahead like all nature, and after all, as I said before, has no pleasure in having his own way. There's nothing on the face of the earth I hate so much as advice."

"And would you reject the advice of a friend?"

"Friend! I don't know what friend means; except somehow I think I might be wrought upon to stop a bullet before Colonel Dangerfield. He's a man now that I would allow to advise me without knocking him down; I liked him from the first hour I saw him, and if I must tell the bare truth, I do believe it was because he always took my advice in coming down the Ohio, and locating his settlement and all that, instead of making believe he knew better than I; I can't stand that, no, no, I can't stand that, anyhow. I'd blow any other man as high as the Alleghanies, if he was to go to advise me. But as I was say-

ing—I wonder what keeps the old cretur so long with the steaks?—as I was saying, it was a blue day when I first put this old rotten tree across my path."

"How came you to commit such an error?"

"Why, I'll tell you how it was. I had lived here I don't know how many years, for it's no matter to me to count the scores of winters and summers, and springs and falls; but I was prehaps, stranger, the most almightiest happiest feller that ever hunted a buffalo. The cretures came sometimes and looked into my door, the deer would hardly get out of my way, and the bears and wolves came growling and howling round the house at night so beautifully—O! if you only had an idea of the splendid independence of living in the woods fifteen or twenty miles from anybody, you'd never be happy anywhere else, I'll be goy blamed if you would. Only think, stranger, of my being all alone, not a soul to lay so much as a straw in my way, to look at me, or to talk to me, or give me advice, or watch which way I was going, or inquire what I was going to do,—O, it was splendid! If I wanted any thing to eat, instead of working for it like a nigger, I took my rifle and shot a deer or a wild turkey, for they were so thick you couldn't miss them; if I wanted amusement, I went into the woods, and had a hunt after the bears and wolves, who sometimes made battle and came pretty nigh treeing me; it was transcendent, anyhow. If I wanted a rousing fire, I went just outside the door and cut down a tree, which fell right under the window, and I had no trouble to *tote* it half a mile. I only wish you may one day be as happy as I was, but that's quite beyond the Rocky

Mountains, for the Gar-broth people are cluttering up the country hereabouts so fast, that no man will be able to do as he pleases much longer. Well, as the Old Boy would have it, the emigration came this way and the game went that, so I was obliged to stay out sometimes all night in the winter to kill a deer, and I got the rheumatism. I was pretty considerably nigh starving, for all I could do was to crawl to the door, and shoot a squirrel or a woodpecker; it's mighty bad living on squirrels and woodpeckers. Well, when I got better, I thought I would somehow go and buy a smart chance of a nigger boy to live with me, and help along in case I should get the rheumatism again, for it's like a wolf, it will be coming back where it has had the taste of blood. But then I had not money enough for this, for I always hated to have more than I wanted, and so I took old Phillis, whose master gave her to me for nothing, and a bad bargain I have had of her, anyhow; for as I said before she takes away all the pleasure of having my own way, which is almost as bad as not having my own way at all. Not that she asks any questions, about where I am going or when I shall come back, but she looks so plaguy curious that I'll be goy blamed if it don't sometimes make me feel as if I wasn't my own master. But here comes the old sinner; she hangs fire like a rusty rifle, but always goes off at last."

And sure enough, the savoury odour of the venison steaks, which far transcends any thing that Jupiter ever snuffed up from pagan altars, smote the olfactory nerves of Bushfield with such a triumphant relish as to mollify his anger, and allay his impatience, of this new species of petticoat gov-

ernment; and the two sat down to the banquet with as good an appetite as ever fell to the lot of ancient epicure, or modern sojourner in that great cook-shop of the civilized world yclept Paris.

CHAPTER XXI.

A most knowing wife, and a most discreet husband.

THE foregoing was one of the longest talks that Bushfield probably ever held in the whole course of his life, a large portion of which had been spent in solitude. He might be called a hermit of a rare species. One who loved to be alone, not for the purposes of pious abstraction, or uninterrupted repose, but that he might indulge his own active, unrestrained love of liberty without interruption. There had been days, nay years of his life, in which he scarcely spoke to a human being; and he had thus acquired a habit of taciturnity which could with difficulty be overcome, except when among those he liked, or animated by the subject of the happiness of his peculiar mode of life. He lived, for the most part, with his dog and his gun; and the encounter with a fellow-creature in the woods he ranged, had the same effect on him that the presence of a wild beast in a populous city has on the peaceable citizens. It was an intrusion, and excited a strong disposition to hunt the outlaw. He was not by any means devoid of excitement in his solitary abode, for hunting had become a habit, a passion; and never did the vainest old soldier relate his exploits in the field with a higher relish of enthusiasm than did our sturdy backwoodsman detail his triumphs over the wild animals that peopled his woodland domain. In doing this, he,

like the war-worn veteran aforesaid, was prone to make inroads upon the regions of the imagination, insomuch that some of his stories actually bordered on the marvellous.

Rainsford accompanied him in one or two of his enormous peregrinations, which generally lasted all day, and would have consumed the night too, had he not protested against sleeping in the open air, though Bushfield swore, "like all wrath," that it was the greatest luxury in the world. But two men of such dissimilar habits seldom covet the society of each other, or form any permanent friendship. Each secretly despises his companion. It is only in the crowded haunts, and among the peaceful occupations of mankind, that the superiority of education, intellectual acquirements, and gentlemanly accomplishments, are highly valued; and it is only on the exposed frontiers of life, in the midst of perils and privations, that hardy daring, and the capacity to endure fatigue, are estimated at their proper value.

Rainsford gave out the third day, and his host voluntarily, and indeed necessarily, accompanied him home to show the track through the woods.

"Stranger," said he, "you've had a mighty poor sort of a raising, I should reckon. Why, you're no more fit for the woods than a wild turkey is for a justice of peace. What would you do now if you had to turn out every day and shoot your dinner, or go without it, or fight a dozen Indians at a time, or find your way through the woods two or three hundred miles, without a path, and nothing to eat but an old pair of moccasins? I wish I may be shot if I don't think some of our old Kentucky women would cut a better figure than you do here."

The last part of this speech grated harshly on the feelings of Rainsford.

"And what would you do," replied he, "if you were obliged to live in a city, change your linen twice a day, and your coat three times; gallant the ladies; attend tea-parties; dance the waltz; and go through all the ceremonies of good breeding? 'Faith, I think you'd cut rather a more ridiculous figure than I do here in the woods. The ladies would all run away from such a savage, and the men laugh at you."

"Would they! If they attempted to follow such a track as that, I'd soon tree them. If I didn't make 'em shut their pans quicker than a flash of lightning, I hope I may be civilized to-morrow, as you call it. I don't much mind being shot at, nor should I care a great deal about running the gauntlet Ingen fashion, because I'm used to that. But let me give you one piece of advice stranger, never laugh at a feller in a hunting-shirt, or you'll be likely to get a most almighty licking. You'll be down as quick as I can dodge an Ingen, and that's quicker than wink, anyhow."

The return of Rainsford was welcomed by Virginia with mingled emotions of pleasure and pain; by Mrs. Judith with most extraordinary marks of satisfaction; and by Master Zeno with wonderful cordiality. Since his departure Mrs. Judith had laboured under a fit of mortal ennui, seeing she had nobody to watch, and her life became as it were a dead blank, for want of the excitement of curiosity. There was not a secret stirring in the whole village of Dangerfieldville. Master Zeno had a still better reason for hailing

the return of his guest; it was now almost time to begin his preparations for the Daily, and he took an early opportunity of jogging Mr. Rainsford's memory.

"Well, well, sir" rubbing his hands; "I've kept the secret."

"What secret?"

"Why—why, you know, the secret you told—I mean that I happened, by the merest accident in the world to overhear in the woods. The secret that you are—hem!—"

A deep paleness passed over the face of the young man; and it was not unnoticed by Master Zeno, who had an eye and an ear like the man in the fairy tale; he could see through a mountain, and hear the grass grow when a secret was in the way.

"Well," and he vainly essayed a melancholy smile. "Well, you have kept your word, you say, and I will keep mine. Make out an estimate of the cost of establishing a paper."

"A daily, sir?"

"Ay, a daily, if you wish. I will give you an order on a merchant, who has money of mine in his hands, at Pittsburg. And you can very likely procure all the materials you want at that place."

"Here it is, sir, here's the estimate. I've had it ready ever since I overheard, by the merest accident in the world, you were—hem. What a fortunate man I am!"

"Very," said the other, dryly, and he went and wrote, and returned with an order for the money required.

"I'm afraid I'm robbing you, sir," said Master Zeno, after putting up the draft snugly in an old leather convenience called a pocket-book. "But

you may calculate on me to a certainty. I'll keep your secret, sir; and if anybody dares to accuse you of being a—hem—I'll attack them in my Daily, in such a style they'll be glad to be quiet. But really, sir, I'm afraid I'm robbing you."

"No, not in the least. I am in possession of more than I want; far more than I shall ever live to use. It is no pleasure to me to be rich, for when I think of the manner in which I became so, I loathe the very name of money. I would willingly be made a public example; that my secret should be exposed to the world, so I could bring back to life, and its best gift, those to whom it once belonged, and restore all I have received, to its owners. You are welcome to the money, so you only make a good use of it."

"I will enlighten the universe," said Zeno; and they parted just at the moment Mrs. Judith had applied her ear to the keyhole, or rather to a knothole, for other there was none.

She heard nothing, save the latter part of the last speech of Rainsford, about being made a public example—of restoring the money to those to whom it once belonged; and above all, the never to be forgotten words; "Take the money, so you only make a good use of it." And she resolved within her secret soul to take special care that this last injunction was complied with.

Master Paddock remained on the exact spot where he had been left by Rainsford, cogitating on the full and free confession he had just heard from that wicked, yet inconsiderate youth, as he now felt satisfied he was. "'To *those* to whom it once belonged.' These were his very words. Then he must have robbed and murdered at least *two* persons! What a diabolical young sinner!

I wish I had made him pay double for keeping his secret. But never mind, I'll get more out of him, I warrant. And when I've got all I can, why I'll quiet my conscience by getting the young rascal hanged."

Having come to this righteous conclusion, he turned round, and turning saw the head of Holofernes within what is called striking distance, for it certainly struck him dumb.

"My dear," quoth the enchanted head, "how much money did Mr. Rainsford give you to keep his secret?"

"Pooh! What money? what secret?"

"Ah! heigho!—what a wicked-world this is. Now, who'd have thought such a nice young man was a—"

"A what?"

"Hem—ah!—heigho!—it's a very scandalous world. I sometimes almost wish I was out of it. But come now, tell me how much money you got for keeping the secret; now do, Zeno!" and she fawned on him like a roaring lioness.

"Pooh! pooh!—nonsense. I've got no money—how should you know any thing about it?"

"Why, then, if you must know, I'll tell you. I happened to be in the next room, and I happened to hear every thing you said, and I know all about it. There now, are you satisfied? Heigho! what a wicked world we live in!"

"Why then, if you know all, I may as well tell you, I suppose."

"Yes, yes—do, do, do—oh!" and she discovered such an itching curiosity, that the shrewd Zeno was convinced she pretended to know more than she really did; whereupon, he coolly replied,—

"But now I think of it, if you *do* really know

all, there is no occasion to waste time in telling you." And so saying, he walked out of the room with the air of a man having money in his pocket, which, we presume, is what is called the air noble.

Had it not been for one single resource, Mrs. Judith would have undoubtedly burst the boiler of her curiosity, and exploded into scalding steam instead of tears. People who live in the great world, surrounded by excitements of a thousand various kinds, and with a thousand resources for passing away the time, can form no idea of the biting curiosity of a real full-blooded village gossip, who, having little employment at home, has no other resource for passing the idle hours than prying into the affairs of her neighbours. It becomes, not only a passion, but the master passion of the soul, and swallows up all the others, as the rod of—no, hang it! that's too musty—as the mighty Mississippi swallows up a hundred mighty streams.

Next to the pleasure of gaining a secret, that of telling it is held the most delectable; nay, some who have investigated this matter more deeply are inclined to the opinion that the after-pleasure of telling, like the dessert of a modern lady's dinner, is the better part of the feast. However this may be, there is no doubt in our minds that Mrs. Judith Paddock would have met with a catastrophe, had she not forthwith solaced her disappointment at failing to get at the whole secret by communicating the portion she did know, to the first person she could get to listen to it, which unfortunately happened to be Miss Virginia Dangerfield. She sought that young maiden, who, in truth, could scarcely bear the sight of her since the communication of this being such a wicked

world, such a scandalous world. She never saw her coming across the way without feeling a shivering presentiment of some unwelcome news; but such is the strange inconsistency of human nature, that she still would linger and listen, though perhaps every word was a dagger to her heart. There is a sort of supernatural fascination in fear, and, above all, in horrible realities. The gentlest, tenderest portion of the human race, that portion whose charity is untiring, whose pity never dies—need I name woman?—which is the most fearful, the most apprehensive, the most delicate, dwells with most intense interest, and lingers most devotedly over the page where horrors are accumulated on horrors, and wickedness is displayed in the most atrocious colours of utter abandonment. We see decent women thronging from all parts of the country to witness the last agonies of a dying villain who falls a merited sacrifice to the sanctity of the laws and the safety of society; not because they are cruel, but that they are attracted by the grateful horrors of the scene, fascinated by the witchcraft of the terrible. All our readers will probably recollect occasions when some horribly disgusting or exquisitely painful exhibition of the vices or infirmities of human nature in its lowest stage of degradation and misery has suddenly presented itself. They have turned away in thrilling horror as they passed; yet, strange to tell, curiosity, or rather the fascination of the terrible, has wrested from them by force a single glance, and that glance has impressed the scene so keenly on the imagination, as to haunt it by day and appear as a spectre by night for a long while afterwards.

It was thus with Virginia, who, while she

shrunk with averted mind from the mere idea of the possibility of the suspicions of Mrs. Judith being true, was yet irresistibly impelled to listen to every new surmise and every questionable circumstance that, while it increased her doubts, added to her sufferings. Already had that struggle between the heart and the reason commenced in her mind, to which it falls to the lot of so many gentle beings either to yield unresisting victims, or, if victors, to conquer at the price of the loss of all that vivacity of hope, that thrilling sense of pleasure, which makes us look up from the dark valley of the shadow of old age with a long, lingering, wishful eye, at the sunshiny region of youth, from which we have imperceptibly slidden for ever.

To such croaking ravens as Mrs. Judith, there is nothing so grateful as to excite surprise, wonder, pleasure, pain, any striking or violent emotion; it is all one to them, provided they can excite something. Indifference gives them the fidgets irretrievably. Mrs. Judith had for this reason particular pleasure in telling Virginia any thing which was calculated to increase her suspicions of Rainsford, for she saw it created the most intense and painful interest. She began, as usual, with the eternal gossip cant of the wickedness of this world, the propensity to scandal, &c. &c., and finally disclosed, not only what she had heard, but what she imagined of what she had not heard of the conversation between Rainsford and Master Zeno, not by any means omitting the *large* sum of money the former had given her husband *to keep his secret.* "If it is not a wicked and abominable secret, why should he bribe my Zeno to

keep it? Ah! heigho! what a wicked world, what a scandalous world we live in?"

Poor Virginia! what a situation was thine, and what a struggle hadst thou to go through in order to hide, if possible, in the folds of thine innocent heart the poisonous asp that lay coiled there instilling his deadly poisons!

"You don't seem well somehow, Miss Phiginny," said this mischievous incendiary, after sitting in simpering hypocritical sympathy, watching the war of feelings reflected in the changeful countenance of the young maiden; "you don't seem well. Let me advise you to take some spring physic—some yerbs; do now, dear Miss Phiginny. Ah! heigho! this *is* a wicked, a scandalous world!" and the woman departed to watch, but not to pray.

Mrs. Dangerfield came in a few minutes after, and found Virginia sitting still, and white as a statue, unconscious of existence. She started as her mother entered, and, throwing her arms about her neck, melted into a quiet shower of tears.

"My dear Virginia, what is the matter with you?"

"I don't know; I cannot tell you now, my dear mother; but in a little while, as soon as I know more, you shall know all."

"In your own good time, my daughter; but remember, there are no sorrows, no perplexities, no wishes, no disappointments which a virtuous and obedient daughter ought to keep long from the ear of a kind, affectionate mother."

"You shall know all; I promise you shall know all as soon as I know it myself."

"I am content, dear Virginia; and now cheer

up, for I see Mr. Rainsford has returned from his visit to Bushfield, and is crossing over this way."

The young lady retired for a few minutes, and met Rainsford with an effort to be cheerful.

CHAPTER XXII.

Proving that the chief use of words is to mar our meaning.

The meeting between Virginia and Rainsford was awkward and embarrassing. Each was conscious of possessing a secret, and each equally apprehensive of betraying it to the other. Virginia could not but perceive that Rainsford displayed a degree of shyness which she suspected arose from his recollection of the emotion he had betrayed at hearing the story of the mad Indian; while Rainsford thought he perceived in her countenance an expression half tender, half fearful, and in her eyes the traces of tears. She forced herself to question him as to the incidents of his visit to Bushfield; he prosed away on the subject till both were heartily tired; and, in short, they talked of every thing except the subject which really occupied their minds.

But they say murder will out at last; and however we may play about a subject of deep interest for a while, like a moth round the candle, we are pretty certain to singe our wings with it in the end. The exquisite pain she had endured under the pressure of the growing suspicion which in spite of herself still rankled in her heart, had brought her to the conviction it was necessary to her future peace that his guilt or innocence should be established. If the former, she had

made up her mind to warn him to leave the place for ever, and to forget, if possible, every feeling towards him but that of gratitude; and if the latter, it was due to his honour, as well as to her own happiness, that he should have an opportunity of establishing it beyond doubt or contradiction. But to put the direct question to a man to whom she was under so deep an obligation, and with whom she was associating almost every day on terms of intimacy, required a hardihood of which she had at no period been mistress. Several times she essayed to touch the subject, but as often her heart failed her; and after talking themselves weary about nothing, a dead, oppressive silence ensued. Chance, however, at length brought them to the subject nearest her heart. Rainsford had roused himself to observe, that as the spring was approaching, he intended soon to take possession of his house, and begin his new settlement.

"You will be very solitary; but perhaps the precepts and example of Mr. Bushfield have made you in love with the independence of living alone?"

"No," replied the young man; "loneliness has no charms for me. I hate a crowd as much as I fear—I mean dislike being alone. But I confess there is one thing which reconciles me in some degree to leaving the society of my friends, and that is, the idea of escaping the eternal inquisition of Mrs. Judith Paddock. I never met with so troublesome a woman in my life."

"Why, she certainly is the gossip of the village."

"Yes, and so fond of getting at the secrets of other people, only that she may keep them from other people. I saw her leave this house a few minutes ago brimful of something. I hope you

have not trusted her with any of *your* secrets," said he, smiling.

"No!" and her heart palpitated as she proceeded; "no, but she intrusted me with the secret of another."

Rainsford gave a slight start; and Virginia, who forced herself to look him full in the eye, fancied she saw an increase of paleness in a face that was always pale. The ice being broken, she nerved herself for the crisis, as all minds of a higher order do when once it has arrived.

"She told me something that deeply concerns you and, I will confess it, me also; for I cannot be indifferent to the character and actions of the man to whom I am so deeply obliged."

"Me? What *can* she say, what *can* she know of me? I assure you, Miss Dangerfield, she *can* know nothing of me. I have never made her my confidant."

"But confidence is not always necessary in these cases. An involuntary look; a sudden start; an indiscreet word; a habit of talking to one's self; a thousand little indications of which we are not aware, or cannot restrain, are the agents by which guilt, or misery, let out their deep buried secrets." The strong feeling which had taken possession of the soul of the young maiden, communicated firmness to her nerves, and enabled her to look Rainsford in the face during this speech, with a firm, yet gentle melancholy expression. With a thrilling pang she saw him wince and quiver with emotion, as thus she touched the string whose music was the howl of the demon that beset his steps by day and by night. He mastered his feelings however; and

collecting all the energies of despair, asked in a firm manly tone for further explanation.

"You ought to know it; and I and my family at least, ought to know if what Mrs. Paddock says she has heard, and seen, and *suspects*, is true or false."

"What—what has she heard? what has she seen? and what does she *suspect?*" said the young man, almost furiously.

"I—I—cannot—yes! I *will* tell you—what I will not deny, has almost—has rendered it absolutely necessary, if it be true, that you—that we should never meet again; that you should quit this place and never return."

"Well, let me hear it, Virginia," replied he, in a hoarse voice; and leaning back in his chair he awaited what was to follow, with the feelings of one whose conscience has already whispered the secret.

Virginia, then, with a kind solemnity, detailed to him the substance of the two confidential communications of Mrs. Judith, at the same time refraining from making any comments, or drawing any conclusions. It was impossible; it was not in her heart; and if it had been, it was not in her tongue to hint at the seeming evident conclusion, arising from such extraordinary emotion, and such a bribe offered for secrecy.

As she proceeded, the feelings of Rainsford became more apparent; he trembled; he gasped for breath; he clasped his hands, and finally covered his face and wept aloud, as if his heart was breaking. The agitation of Virginia was almost equal to his own, and she kept him company in silent tears. At length recovering herself she put the question directly.

"Is the tale of Mrs. Paddock true?"

"It is—but—"

"Then let us never see each other more. I cannot betray you. But you must leave this place for ever."

"But, Virginia! Miss Dangerfield—let me explain—"

"I want no explanations; nothing you can say will remove or soften the dreadful feelings your presence now inspires. Leave me—I forgive you. I—I pity you."

"But, dear Virginia—"

"Dear Virginia! How dare a wretch like you apply that epithet to a virtuous woman?"

"I am a wretch; the veriest of all wretches that ever crawled on the earth, and cursed the hour he was born. But my misfortune ought not to deprive me of all sympathy. God knows I want it."

"Misfortune!" cried she, contemptuously.

"*I* at least cannot help what I am; it was, or it will be the work of fate; the curse of inheritance."

"The work of fate!" cried Virginia, passionately. "Yes! this is the blasphemous cant of every wretched being, who thus attempts to fasten the temptations of Satan on the dispensations of Heaven, and vindicate himself by accusing his God. Go, go—leave me, and for ever, for the more you attempt to extenuate, the more I loathe you. May Heaven forgive me for saying so to the saviour of my life!"

"Well, madam, I *will* go," said he, proudly. "I will try to forget you: but if I cannot, I will at least endeavour to remember you only as one

who is an exception to the rest of her gentle sex, in being without pity."

"Pity! is not the tale of Mrs. Paddock true?"

"It is; I cannot deny it."

"Then, why are you here, sir?"

"I am gone, madam."

"Miserable, hardened wretch!" exclaimed Virginia, as he shut the door and departed, with the insolent air of an injured man.

END OF VOL. I.

WESTWARD HO!

WESTWARD HO!

A TALE.

CHAPTER I.

"We'll lose ourselves in Venus' grove of myrtle,
Where every little bird shall be a Cupid,
And sing of love and youth; each wind that blows
And curls the velvet leaves shall breathe delights;
The wanton springs shall call us to their banks,
And on the perfum'd flowers woo us to tumble.
But we'll pass on untainted by gross thoughts,
And walk as we were in the eye of Heaven."

"O RARE Ben Jonson!" said some one, and O rare Beaumont and Fletcher say we; for in honest sincerity we prefer this gentle pair to all the old English dramatic writers except Shakspeare. For playful wit, richness of fancy, exuberance of invention, and, above all, for the sweet magic of their language, where shall we find their superiors among the British bards? It is not for us obscure wights to put on the critical nightcap, and, being notorious criminals ourselves, set up as judges of others; but we should hold ourselves base and ungrateful if we did not seize this chance opportunity to raise our voices in these remote regions of the West, where, peradventure, they never dreamed of one day possessing millions of

readers, in humble acknowledgment of the many hours they have whiled away by the creations of their sprightly fancy, arrayed in the matchless melody of their tuneful verse. But mankind must have an idol, one who monopolizes their admiration and devotion. The name of Shakspeare has swallowed up that of his predecessors, contemporaries, and successors; thousands, tens of thousands echo his name that never heard of Marlow,—Marlow, to whom Shakspeare himself condescended to be indebted, and whose conception of the character of Faust is precisely that of Goëthe;—of Webster, Marston, Randolph, Cartwright, May, and all that singular knot of dramatists, who unite the greatest beauties with the greatest deformities, and whose genius has sunk under the licentiousness of the age in which it was their misfortune to live. The names of Massinger, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher are, it is true, more familiar; but it is only their names and one or two of their pieces that are generally known. These last have been preserved, not on the score of their superior beauties, but because they afforded an opportunity for Garrick and other great performers to reap laurels which belonged to the poet, by the exhibition of some striking character. Far be it from us to attempt to detract from the fame of Shakspeare. Superior he is, beyond doubt, to all his countrymen who went before or came after him, in the peculiar walk of his genius; but he is not so immeasurably superior as to cast all others into oblivion; and to us it seems almost a disgrace to England that a large portion of her own

readers, and a still larger of foreigners, seem ignorant that she ever produced more than one dramatist.

But "Go ahead! go ahead!" cries the impatient reader, who, in honest truth, hath been spoiled by being of late too much indulged in high-seasoned dainties and marvellous adventures treading on the heels of each other like the ranks of an undisciplined militia; and, obedient to his high behest, we resume our story.

The early spring of the west, where no cutting, villanous easterly winds, no cold, white, chilling, sea-born fogs that come, like winding-sheets, to wrap the wasting victim of consumption in the last garment, delay the opening buds and opening flowers,—the early spring now peeped forth from under the little blue wild violets and pale snowdrops, to see if perchance that old hoary tyrant Winter had packed up his "plunder," and gone about his business. The redbirds and the paroquets exhibited their gay plumage among the opening purple buds; and the life-current of nature, released from its frosty chains, began again to flow through the veins of the forest. It was the season for making maple sugar, a rural festival, which was at the period we speak of, and we hope still is, the signal for rural pastimes and innocent recreation.

The luscious breath of the balmy air, which awakened the flowers, the buds, and the birds; which set the insects humming in the sunshine, and invited the stiffened fly to come and solace himself in the south window, called forth the villagers to this their favourite amusement.

The colonel, Mrs. Dangerfield, Virginia, the pestilent Mrs. Judith, and one and all, arrayed themselves for the yearly saccharine saturnalia, where etiquette and precedence abided far away, and all were left to the guidance of that natural delicacy which, except among fools and blackguards, is always sufficient for the preservation of a due decorum. That last remnant of the Virginia aristocracy, the great Pompey Ducklegs, whose legs, in sooth, were every year getting more and more into a waddle, insomuch that it became apparent they would soon suffice but for the last long journey,—Pompey the elder did forthwith summon Pompey the younger to the field, and bade him exert himself for the honour of the family. Nay, the veritable Mr. Littlejohn, of whom we reproach ourselves that we have so long lost sight, did gather himself together with a mighty effort, and with an effort still mightier did rise up from the three chairs whereon it was his wont to repose the outward man.

The trees were tapped; the sweet redundant juices of the maple-trees began to flow into the little wooden troughs; the fires were lighted, the kettles filled with sap, and the respectable matrons presided with dignity and skill over the process of boiling it into sirup, skimming the refuse scum, and lastly crystallizing the pure residuum —may Heaven pardon us such a word when on a subject so simple! This process lasted until night, and then the forest glowed in the artificial sunshine of the ruddy fires, and the echoes answered from their long quiet abodes to the sound of song, laughter, and merriment. We

confess we wish we had been there to taste this the sweetest of all sugars, and to share in the blameless pastime; for if there is a spot on the ragged garment of human existence which the stain of guilt or remorse has not incurably soiled, it is these moments of innocent relaxation in which we envy none, hate none, injure none, and the heart expands to a holy affection for nature and her great inspiring, creating, preserving Spirit.

Bushfield, too, was here in all his glory, and was not only a whole team, but a team and a half, good measure, as he affirmed. This was the only occasion in which he did not eschew a crowd, saving and excepting a barbecue. He frisked about from one fire to the other, played his practical jokes on Pompey the Great and Pompey the Little, and roused the echoes of the forest with his noisy vivacity. Even the stern inflexible gravity of the Black Warrior relaxed under the influence of the scene; and it is said, though we can hardly believe it, that he actually degenerated into a laugh at seeing Bushfield by gentle violence enforce Mrs. Judith Paddock to attempt a waltz with him, of which he had heard a description from Rainsford, and at the end of which he jumped up as high as a young sapling.

To sum up all and close the rural festival, certain blooming young damsels—we would they had been shepherdesses!—and certain lusty youth—O that they were only shepherds, like those of Sicily, of whom Theocritus has sung, and whose sheepskin inexpressibles he hath immortalized!—certain youths and damsels of the

village, inspired by the breath of spring, the example of the little birds, and the little rural abstract rambles they occasionally indulged in the wicked twilight of the woods, were enticed to fall in love and pledge their faith for ever in presence of the dryads and hamadryads, who discreetly promised never to betray them. But there were no secrets where Mrs. Judith Paddock abided, and in less than four-and-twenty hours after these "gentle passages of arms" there was not a soul in the village of Dangerfieldville ignorant that the temple of Hymen would soon receive at least half a dozen pairs of votaries fresh from the festival of the sugar making. Were we inclined to philosophize on the mystifications of the human heart, we might here inquire into that singular affinity which beyond all doubt subsists between the making of sugar and the making of love, two of the sweetest occupations of this world. But we shall leave this to some future work, wherein we purpose to demonstrate that maple sugar is maple sugar, and love, love; for the doing of which the gentle reader will be doubtless greatly obliged to us, seeing that such is the astonishing development of science, philosophy, and all that sort of thing, that we ourselves begin to doubt the postulatum of the learned Theban Touchstone, that "ipse is he," that love *is* love, or that maple sugar *is* maple sugar.

CHAPTER II.

An evening walk, an evening talk, and what followed.

Rainsford did not enter his appearance at the woodland festival; he had gone over to his house, under pretence of making preparations for his removal. Virginia, though she kept up her spirits tolerably since their last interview, felt a heavy weight on her heart, and fell into that state of mind which inclines to lonely meditations. One evening she wandered alone down to the river-side, not to enjoy the opening charms of spring and the rural beauties of the scene, but to brood over past times and future probabilities. The season and the prospect which spread itself out before her were both equally alluring. On the opposite shore of the river the high and haughty precipices of dark-coloured rocks threw their deep reflections upon the bosom of the clear waters that here, in consequence of their expansion, rested quietly in their capacious basin. The upper line of these everlasting walls, viewed from where she stood, reared itself high in the air, and nothing was seen beyond or above them but the pure blue sky of evening. As the sun gradually sank to the horizon, it appeared a blood-red ball of flame; and when half hidden behind the massy barrier of the stream, assumed the appearance of a great signal fire, such as in ancient times gave

token for the valleys and the hills of Old Scotland, the land of cakes, the land of Burns and of Walter Scott, to send forth their hardy denizens to the dangers they loved to encounter. The shore on that side where reposed the village of Dangerfieldville was a low rich bottom, as it is yclept in western phrase. A fellow with some geology in his brain would call it alluvial; but we confess we delight to speak to the comprehension of ordinary readers, whom it is our pleasure to please. It was such a little paradise as whilom the shepherds haunted in the pastorals once so admired, but now eschewed as fantastic pictures of a state of society which never had an existence. So much the worse, so much the worse; for to us it seems that the very *beau ideal* of human happiness would consist in this imaginary union (if such a one were possible) of all the simplicity of rural innocence, all the mild excitements of rural scenes, rural amusements, and rural occupations, with gentle manners and intellectual refinement. It says nothing in favour of the state of manners or morals, when the human mind can only be excited to feeling or enthusiasm by high-coloured pictures of passion and guilt, or high-seasoned temptations to folly and crime.

The general character of the scene we have attempted to describe was that of silence and repose. But ever and anon a boat would glide down the stream, and the silence be interrupted for a few moments by the laugh or song of the boatmen, or the echoes roused by the most touching of all music, in the proper scene and season,—the windings of the mellow wooden

trumpet, which those who have once heard, on the lonely rivers of the south and west, will, peradventure, never forget. No hunter's horn, no inspiring bugle, no oaten reed of shepherd piping among the fauns and dryads in Grecian or Sicilian vale, ever sent forth such mellow, melting sounds, as we have heard in days of yore, rolling in fleecy volumes from the simple wooden trumpet of a river Orpheus, black as the petticoat of night, when not a star watches in the dingy firmament.

Virginia's eyes were on the scene, but her thoughts were far away. It is scarcely necessary to say whither they were wandering, or whether they were pleasant or painful. Such as they were, they were suddenly interrupted by the sound of footsteps, and the appearance of a person she at once recognised as the identical being who was at that moment in the entire occupation of her mind. She started, and was offended.

"Mr. Rainsford," said she, "after what has passed, I did not think—I did not wish ever to see you again." And she was proceeding towards home with a hurried step.

"Virginia—Miss Dangerfield, forgive me for wishing to see you once more. I am going away to-morrow. I shall never return, and I —I don't know whether I shall be more happy or miserable for the indulgence, but I wished to bid you farewell; and to part in peace with one with whom I have lived till lately in peace."

"Well, sir, in peace let us part; though I must be allowed to say, your intruding into our

peaceful village, and accepting the hospitality of my father; and, and—but of myself, I will say nothing. I ask, if you think all this was not, in the circumstances under which you came here, dishonourable and infamous?"

"Yes, yes, it was so,—I confess, I know it was so. I had no right, wretched being that I am, I had no right to endeavour to make an interest in the affections, or create an attachment in the heart of any human being; living, as I do, in the horrible anticipation, nay, the horrible certainty of one day giving nothing but pain to those who take an interest in my fate."

"You should have thought of this before, Mr. Rainsford."

"I should—nay, I did. But think, Virginia, when a man has no friends, no relatives, not a soul that takes an interest in his fate; when he has buried all he loves, all that love him; when he loathes the sight, and shuns the society of his early companions, and roves a wretched wreck of body and mind, in the vast solitude of the world, without rudder, or compass, or haven of repose. Think, Virginia, what must be the self-denial of that man who, under such circumstances, could resist the kindness of benevolent strangers. And yet, you may remember I sought not your father's hospitality."

"I know it—I know it. But, when you knew that you had no claim, you ought not to have accepted it," replied Virginia, whom the sad picture Rainsford had drawn of himself softened almost into forgiveness. "But it is useless to say more, or to prolong this interview.

Whatever may have been your offences to me and mine, I forgive them. You saved my life; I cannot forget that. And may the great Being you have offended so deeply, receive the gift of life you bestowed on me as an atonement for that of which you deprived another.

Rainsford looked aghast.

"Deprived another! What do you—what can you mean, Virginia?"

"Your conscience will tell you what I cannot utter."

"Conscience! upon my soul I do not comprehend you!" Yet Rainsford trembled all the while with a secret consciousness.

"Must I speak? must I remind you of your own confession?" cried she, impatiently.

"No, Virginia, there is no necessity for that, it is never out of my mind for a moment, asleep or awake. It haunts my very dreams, and makes my nights ten thousand times more miserable than my days! But still I cannot comprehend what you said just now."

"Hypocrite!—then if I must, I must. Answer me," turning full upon him, "answer me, Mr. Rainsford; have you not confessed yourself a murderer!" And she shuddered with loathing, as she uttered that appalling word.

"Murderer! ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed aloud. "No, no, thank Heaven, not yet, not yet. Whatever I may be, in good time—"

"Wretched man!"

"Yes, I am wretched, but I am not a murderer. Ha, ha, ha! what a high opinion you have of me. Add thief and pickpocket, seducer—madman to it, Virginia, to make up the

sum total of my accomplishments; do, do, Virginia!"

Virginia shuddered, with mingled emotions of disgust and horror, as he continued in a more composed manner.

"Miss Dangerfield, what you have just said convinces me of the propriety of my making certain explanations which you declined to hear once, but which I demand as an act of justice you should listen to now. Come, come, you must, you shall hear me. You shall hear what never was and never will be disclosed by me again to any human being voluntarily. Come, sit down on this old gray rock, and listen to what I shall say. It is worth the hearing, I promise you."

Virginia could no longer resist; she sat down, trembling with emotion, and, leaning against a huge tree that grew out of the side of the rock, awaited what followed.

"Well, sir, go on, and let me hear it all."

"Virginia, there is madness in my blood and race!"

"Madness! Oh, God! Madness?"

"Be not alarmed; there is no danger yet awhile at least. I will not harm you, dear, kind, benevolent soul, though you did suspect me of murder."

"Did you not acknowledge it?"

"No, on my soul! But I now see into the source of your mistake, and will remove it if you will listen calmly to my story.

"I am the last of my family, and so much the better, for when I am gone its name and memory will be for ever buried in the rubbish

of its own miserable ruins. Virginia! Virginia! I have undertaken a task which I fear will accelerate the catastrophe which haunts my imagination every moment of my life."

"Only assure me solemnly of your innocence, and I will spare you the rest."

"No, all shall be disclosed, now that I have wrought myself to the task. I said I was the last of my family; but that is the lot of thousands,—a vulgar calamity not worth thinking or talking of. All men die; all generations, names, families, nations, the peopled millions of the universe, all pass away; but to die as mine have done, as I shall die,—there's the rub, Virginia, there's the rub! My family was respectable and rich, so rich that fortune seemed determined to make all the amends she could for the curse denounced upon them by fate—ay, fate, Virginia! do you not believe in fate? It is but another, a profane name for Providence. Ha! ha! It is astonishing what a difference the world makes in the same things called by different names! But we were rich and well educated; we had every outward means of enjoyment; and yet, for almost fifty years never has there existed a more wretched, hopeless race on the face of the earth. The story goes—it may be true, or it may be false—but the story goes—and it has had an influence over our family that while one of them remains alive will never cease. It was said that our grandfather, who was a loyalist in the revolutionary war, in some battle, no matter where, encountered an old gray-headed neighbour, a whig, who surrendered him his sword, and cried out for quarter.

My grandfather was in that state of bloodthirsty excitement which is so often felt in the heat of battle, and, without listening to his entreaties, cut him across the head till he sank to the ground. 'I know you, squire,' cried he, as he fell. Some years after, when he was settled on his estate, which he received with his wife, and had a family around him, it chanced that an old beggar came up the avenue, and asked charity in an incoherent manner, which indicated derangement of mind. He was somewhat insolent, and my grandfather roughly ordered him away.

"'You are a kind-hearted gentleman,' said the old man; 'what might your name be?'

"'It's of no consequence to you; go away, old man.'

"'Yes, but it is. I like to know the names of my benefactors, that I may pray for them.'

"My grandfather ordered him away; but before he left the court-yard he learned from a servant his name, and returned, and stood right before him; he lifted up his old ragged hat, and displayed a head seamed with scars, ill concealed by a few white hairs.

"'Do you see this old head, major? and how it is marked, as if the plough had been over it? You don't remember me; but I do you. Do you know whose sword it was that made these gashes?'

"My grandfather was about going away, when he cried out,—

"'Stop, major; it's impolite to turn your back on an old acquaintance. Don't you remember a gray-headed soldier who asked you

for quarter, and you cut him down like an old rotten cabbage? My name is Rockwell—Amos Rockwell; we were neighbours once, before you removed to these parts.'

"My grandfather remembered the man and the circumstance, and immediately offered him all the reparation in his power, a home for the rest of his life. But his mind began to wander, and he no longer understood what was said to him.

"'A tory, a tory is a highway robber, and I'll prove it,' and he fell into incoherent nonsense. Before he departed, however, he came close up to my grandfather, and said,

"'Do you know, major, I'm a fortune-teller? I get my bread by it now. I'll tell yours for a shilling; I would not be in your place for all you are worth and ten times more. I'm pretty mad sometimes, they say, but you'll be ten times worse before you die; you'll be a mad family among you, and I could find in my heart to pity you, if it wasn't that you cut open my head when I asked for quarter, and let in so much air that it has been like a bladder ever since. Good-by, I shall be this way again one of these days to see if you're mad, and if you are we'll have a merry time of it.'

"He left my grandfather somewhat struck with this strange medley of sense and nonsense, for he was a man of nervous temperament, and subject to fits of low spirits. It passed away, however, or only occurred at long intervals, when accident or association would bring the incident of the old beggar to his mind. About

the same time next year he returned again, and on encountering my grandfather, exclaimed,

"'What, not mad yet? well, you've got only two years more to run, and then we'll have our frolic out.'

"This second visit had a sensible effect, as I have heard, on my grandfather, who had in the interim lost one of his two children. But when he again returned the third time, my grandfather was seriously shocked.

"'You've one more year of grace,' said he, 'and then, if I live, you and I will set out on our travels together to see the world, and knock our noddles together, for yours will be as empty as mine soon, or I can't see into a millstone.'

"It was foredoomed that the thing should happen, and the beggar was only the instrument of fate in giving the warning. It was a sort of retributive justice that he should be permitted to become the messenger of Providence, as well as the agent in assisting to bring about what was to come to pass at all events. My grandfather brooded over these warnings until he could think of nothing else, and his nervous predisposition received new force by the sudden death of his wife, which calamity left him with no other solace than a little weakly son about four years old. The neighbourhood was solitary; no one lived within less than two or three miles; the nearest building was an old half-ruined church, which had the reputation of being haunted, and whose moss-grown tombstones stood as thick as the trees of the forest. By day it was sufficiently cheerful; but the

stillness of the night, interrupted only by the drowsy hum of insects, the croaking of frogs, and the occasional night music of the owl and whip-poor-will, presented a sort of void for the imagination to people with spectres of its own creation.

"My grandfather gradually grew visionary and melancholy. He became a devotee; he became a fanatic; he—he ran mad, and raised his hand against that life to which he himself had given being! He was confined in a cell, and dashed—"

Here the young man paused, panting, wiping his forehead, down which the big drops rolled their way, and exhibiting the intensity of mental suffering. Virginia could not speak; wonder, doubt, superstition for the first time overwhelmed her imagination, and she shuddered at the anticipation of unknown inscrutable horrors. After a few moments he went on.

"My father grew up an intelligent, well-principled, virtuous man; married; was blessed—ah! luckily for him he did not live to see two sons, *aye, three*, grow up to be the curse of his existence. My father,—but why should I dwell on such soul-sickening scenes and recollections? his story in its catastrophe is that of my grandfather, and let it rest in oblivion. Now, Virginia, now comes the whirlwind and the earthquake; now the curse begins to approach me nearer and nearer, until I feel the grasp of fate about my throat. We, I and my two elder brothers, often thought and often shuddered over the fate of our father and grandfather, the latter of which some foolish or malignant peo-

ple detailed to us. But we felt no apprehensions for ourselves, although it was observed by some of our friends that we were all inclined more or less to melancholy and superstition, as *they* called it; but I know better now, and have another name for it, PRESENTIMENT.

"We lived together, and loved each other, until my elder brother began to, to—spare me, spare me the detail, Virginia; it is time for me to conclude, or I shall go mad *before my time.* It is sufficient, it must be sufficient to say, that my dear brothers, one after the other, precisely at the same age, under the same circumstances, and under the same influence of a gloomy anticipation of the fate which every succeeding victim more surely marked was sooner or later to become his own, followed the footsteps of my grandfather and father, and died, and made no sign of having once belonged to the race of miserable inheritors of a curse which goes by the name of a glorious privilege. I, I alone remain; there is none other; no grandfather, father, or brothers to run distracted, but me; the vial of wrath has no other head but mine to pour out upon. The hour approaches; the next birthday, and then, then you must take care of me, Virginia. I shall be dangerous, especially to those I love, as I do thee, dear woman of my heart. At this moment I dare to tell thee so, for I feel like one that, having disclosed the inmost secret of his soul, cares not who knows all the rest. Yes, I, I the wretched inheritor of curses that have never fallen to the ground; I that can bring you nothing but a benediction of horrors; I that ought to be

howling among the wild beasts, or the still wilder cells and dungeons of my kind; I dare to tell thee so, Virginia.

"When my last brother kill—died, I could not stay any longer in a place where I was looked upon by the people as a victim marked out by destiny; as a sort of mysterious object of the wrath of Heaven. I sold my estate, and bent my way to some spot where I and my story should never have been heard of, and where I might be looked upon as a fellow-creature by my fellow-creatures. A distant hope likewise animated me at times, that possibly change of scene, change of air, change of life, together with the absence of every thing that could give to my mind the fatal direction of all my family, might relieve me for a while from the besetting fiend. At a distance, and when doubtful whither to go, I heard of this village, and of the character of your father. I came hither; I found a welcome, friends, all, and more than I ever expected to find in this world; and for a little while I hoped to be at least as happy as others of my fellow-creatures. But I feel it is all in vain; I have a presentiment which never yet deceived me, but is as sure as fate itself, and which assures me that my hours are numbered. Hah, hah, hah! isn't this a romantic tale for a fair lady's ear; a touching appeal from a thriving wooer to his lady love? am not I irresistible, Virginia? hah, hah, hah!"

"Don't laugh; don't laugh, for God's sake!" cried the young maiden.

"What, you'd rather hear me howl, and

gnash my teeth, and rattle my chains, and chatter nonsense? Well, perhaps it would be more in character."

Virginia soothed him by degrees into something like composure.

"The anticipation of misery, after all, is better than the consciousness of guilt. I am thankful that it is no worse."

"But how could you believe for a moment the absurd tale of murder?" asked he, reproachfully.

"Did not you yourself contribute to deceive me?"

"Perhaps I did. I could not know what was passing in your mind, nor you in mine. If you knew how I shrink from the idea that any human being should suspect the cause of my melancholy, and that my apprehensions are for ever fixed to that one single point, you would easily conceive why I took it for granted you alluded to no other. In the same manner I was deceived by Paddock's suspicions, and bribed him, not to conceal a crime, but a misfortune."

"And I, misled by the turn given by Mrs. Judith to your violent emotions and ambiguous exclamations, mistook your confession of one thing for that of another. You will pardon me, I hope?" said she, with a melancholy smile.

"If you will pardon me for daring to attempt to establish an interest in the hearts of a worthy family, who, if they cherish any regard for me, must one day mourn over my fate. But let me again remind you what it is to be an out-

cast, an exception to our fellow-creatures; to wander through the peopled solitudes of the world, a guest only at the tables of strangers; to go and come, without a soul caring whither or when; and to receive no sympathy from a human being. Such was my case when I came here, and was received with a kind hospitality that went to my heart. I could not for the soul of me resist it at first, or resign it afterwards. Will you forgive me for cheating you into friendship for one who is destined to repay it with bitter recollections, perhaps with something worse?" and he shuddered with some gloomy anticipation that passed over his mind, as he added, "I shall leave you to-morrow. You must never witness it."

"Witness what?" asked Virginia, anxiously.

"You must never see me gradually stripped of my mind's regalia, the attributes of godlike man, one by one. To see me hate those I loved; to see me sit brooding over one single miserable anticipation, which will grow and grow from hour to hour, and day to day, until it becomes a gigantic spectre so horrible that reason turns away from it shuddering, and takes refuge in madness. To see me wandering about like a wild beast, the enemy of all and feared by all, until at last, like the wolf or the tiger, I am caught, and chained, and shut from the light of heaven. I will spare you this, Virginia, and depart to some place where no one knows or cares who or what I am; where, when the crisis arrives, I may howl without piercing the ear, and die without wounding the hearts of my friends."

The deep melancholy of his voice, as he drew this appalling picture, touched the heart of Virginia, and drew tears from her eyes. Though her feelings towards Rainsford had been restrained from giving way to the violence of love, they had long passed the boundaries of mere ordinary friendship. She certainly preferred him far above any man she had ever seen, which indeed was no great compliment, she had seen so few. But the capricious changes in his conduct and temper, joined to the melancholy gloom which so often overspread his countenance, while it excited her interest, created doubts and suspicions, which prevented that unbounded confidence necessary to the very existence of love in the heart of a sensible and virtuous woman.

The disclosure just made, had invested him with a strange inexplicable interest, where pity was coupled with a kind of vague indefinite fear. Sometimes as her fancy realized the picture he had drawn of himself in anticipation, she would shrink from him with trembling apprehension; while at others when he presented the fair reality of an amiable handsome youth, with a mind stored with all the richness of past and present times; a voice of touching melody; an eye which in his happier moments was yet more eloquent than his tongue, and a heart that not only seemed pure and good, but was all hers; then she felt that soft and yielding influence which prompts the pure virgin to wish to join her fate with some chosen one, and share his joys or sorrows in the journey through this world.

A silence of some minutes was at length interrupted by the wild quaver of a screech-owl, from the dark precipice on the opposite shore of the river. It broke on the dead silence of the evening with a tone so shrill, so cold, and cheerless, that it is not to be wondered at that superstition has connected it with its other regalia of horrors. The favourite haunts of this invisible bird are deep woods, mouldering ruins, and churchyards. He lives among the dead, and his sunshine is the obscurity of utter darkness. He sees when others of the cheerful denizens of the air are blind; he sallies out of his sepulchre in some old hollow tree, to screech and scream his funeral warnings under the windows of the startled peasant, when all the rest of the feathered race are enjoying their innocent repose among the whispering leaves of the forest.

The scream was so shrill, and broke so abruptly on the deathlike repose of nature, that it made Virginia, who was accustomed to the sound, start from the revery into which she had fallen.

"Let us go home," said she.

"A few moments. That is my music, Virginia; it is a prophetic song. Don't you think that screech-owls see into futurity?"

"Certainly not, for then they would be wiser than rational beings."

"Rational beings! what is reason but a proud temple built on the sands, to be overthrown by the first blast that whistles by? I can understand that owl as well as if he spoke English. He is telling me—hark!"

Another long shrill quaver came over the still waters.

"Hark! dost thou know what he is saying, Virginia? He tells me to make the most of the present moments; to enjoy thy dear society in all its full fruition of delight; to listen to the music of thy voice, to hear thee breathe so softly on the night; to exchange with thee the rich treasures of thy mind, for the miserable counterfeit coin of mine, for the last, last time, for to-morrow, nay, this night we are to part for ever. There is truth in owls, you may depend upon it."

"Let us go home," again said Virginia, rising.

"A little longer, Virginia, for the prophet over yonder says it is the last time. Come, look with me once more at this lovely work of Nature's cunning hand. It has a moral; it is prophetic, too, like the owl. The pure sky up yonder is a mirror in which we may see if we view aright the reflection of our future days. Every human being has a star there, which sparkles forth his history and his fate. My planet is the moon; she does not shine now, as if to indicate my light of joy and hope will be extinguished this night. But the river, the river, that is your true prophet. See how its waves roll quietly away! not one drop will ever return; and so with me. They find their way into the ocean of waters, and are lost for ever; I shall return to the ocean of the world, and the kindest wish that I can ever breathe for thee, Virginia, is, that my name, my fate, my very memory may be lost in oblivion."

Virginia paused, and was silent a few moments; she then said, with faltering hesitation,

"Why should you go to-morrow, or indeed go at all?"

"Have you not driven me away, Virginia?"

"That was when I believed you guilty, and hated you."

"And now you *pity* me!" said Rainsford, with bitterness. "You look upon me as a rare monster, something out of the ordinary sphere of mankind; and wonder at me as the boys do at a mad beggar in the streets."

"No, on my soul I don't, Mr. Rainsford."

"Give me the proof, then," cried he, vehemently; "I love you, Virginia; I have told you so before. If any human being can chase away the fiend that haunts my reason and my fancy day and night, it is you. To know that you are interested in my happiness; to know that I have a watchful cherub praying for and shielding me from fate itself by her purity and virtue, will, if it is not irrevocably decreed otherwise, redeem me from the fate of all my family. Now, Virginia, to try thee! darest thou promise, darest thou pledge the purity of thine immortal soul to me; me, standing on the brink of a yawning gulf, and dizzy with looking down upon it; darest thou promise me—'Sdeath! what a selfish scoundrel I am! no, no, it is decreed; I *must* go."

"Mr. Rainsford," said Virginia, with a sad, yet firm solemnity mingled with tenderness; "Mr. Rainsford, I think I know what you are going to say; say on, and be assured that what a woman sensible of her duty to her parents

and herself, tenderly sensible of her obligations to you, and of the claim you have on her gratitude, ought to do, can do, that will I do with all my heart."

"Well then, Virginia, if it should please the great Giver of life and reason to spare me the bitter draught which all my race have drank and died of—if I should pass the fated period, and, having passed, I shall not fear it afterwards—will you, dearest Virginia, *can* you consent to share my fortune with me, to become the chosen blessing to repay me for all I have suffered in this world? Answer me, frankly and finally."

"With the approbation of my parents I will," replied she, after a pause, and hesitatingly.

"Ha! your father and mother! true, true, they must know it; they must know all, and shrink from me as all others who knew my history, save you, have done, Virginia. I cannot bear to be made a spectacle, an object of horrible commiseration, of mingled scorn and pity; to have every word, and look, and action scanned with jealous scrutiny, and distorted into an indication of approaching alienation of mind. No, no, dearest Virginia, be you the only depository of my secret; do not be kind by halves; give all or nothing."

Virginia hesitated; but, moved at length by his forlorn and hapless state, she promised not to betray the confidence of that evening.

"A thousand thanks, dearest, most beneficent Virginia. I shall now have something to live for, and, instead of for ever brooding over the dark vista of the future, which hitherto has pre-

sented to me nothing but spectres of horror, look forward to the hope that, under the guidance of an angel, and shielded by her wings, I may yet live to taste that happiness which has been an alien to my heart ever since the dreadful conviction was implanted in it, that I should go the way of all that I loved or that ever loved me."

"May the gracious Providence ordain it so."

"Virginia," resumed he, with a solemn earnestness, "Virginia, permit me here to seal the compact on the sacred purity of thy balmy lips, the first and the last time, unless the new vision that has just dawned upon me should be realized. For here I solemnly swear, in presence of all those silent witnesses that sparkle yonder, never to take, never to ask of you any one of those sweet condescensions which virtuous delicacy may blamelessly bestow on true affection, until I can claim, and you can grant with a perfect confidence, that last and greatest blessing of possessing you. My spotless, pure Virginia shall never run the risk of having her future life poisoned by the recollection of the endearments of one who some day may be clanking his chains in a dungeon. Come, thou dear one; the first, and perhaps the last."

The maiden yielded a modest compliance, and one kiss, one embrace was given and received in silence; one kiss and one embrace sealed the communion of weal and wo. They returned together, and Virginia was at once reminded of the rashness of the promise of secrecy she had just made by the inquiring

looks of her mother, and the cool salutation of Colonel Dangerfield. She longed to throw herself on the maternal bosom, and disclose all that had passed.

CHAPTER III.

A half-confidence is worse than none, which is not the case with half a loaf of bread.

MUCH of the succeeding night was passed by Virginia in wakeful anxiety. She did not regret the engagement just entered into, but it weighed heavily on her heart. There was a fearful responsibility attending it, a risk so much greater than even that which ever accompanies the surrender of our happiness to the keeping of another, that she almost shuddered when it presented itself in the solitude of reflection and darkness. Yet there was something of touching and exquisite tenderness in the idea of watching over the welfare of one so circumstanced as Rainsford; a thrilling gratification in the hope that he might yet, under her gentle pilotage, steer clear of the rock on which his family had all been wrecked, one after the other. She resolved to watch over him, as a mother over a sickly child; to devote herself as far as might be, to his amusement; and to lure him, if possible, from his bitter customary contemplations, by holding up a glass which should reflect the future in fairer and more alluring colours.

When she met the family in the morning, the colonel saluted her, as usual, with a kiss, but not precisely such a kiss as she had been ac-

customed to receive; and Mrs. Dangerfield discovered, in the timid consciousness with which Virginia poured out the tea, that she had something on her mind she did not dare to disclose. "But she will tell it the first opportunity," thought the good mother; "for she has never yet had any secrets from me." Virginia, however, did not tell her the first opportunity, and her maternal anxiety was awakened to a watchfulness she never thought necessary before.

Rainsford now visited more frequently, and it was plain to Virginia that the hope which animated him had a most favourable influence on his mind and spirits. He indulged himself in occasional humorous sallies, displayed various indications of gentlemanly accomplishments, which hitherto he had not the heart to draw forth, and sometimes spread his wings in such almost fearful flights of fancy, that he seemed to be just hovering over the confines of rational perception. She shuddered, she thrilled, and she admired; but it was with that feeling with which we behold the seaboy toppling high on the topgallant-mast in a tempest, or the gambols of a thoughtless child on the verge of a precipice. In a little time, however, the perpetual watchfulness she practised gradually produced a feeling in the tender and virtuous heart of Virginia, which partook almost equally of the warmth of a mistress, the untiring, sleepless, holy, guardian care of a mother. It could hardly be called love that she felt; there was too great an infusion of anxiety, of care; too much of solemnity to admit of the buoyant bubbles which float on the surface of the sweet-

est draught of human bliss, when love and hope form its only ingredients.

The colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield could not but notice what was passing; and though the supervision of parents over their children, more especially their daughters, is not so rigid and watchful in this country, nor, happily for us, so necessary, as in many others, still the former could not refrain from occasional hints, nay, surmises, about young ladies having their own secrets, and being too wise to consult their parents on the most important occasions of their lives. The mother said nothing; but in the language of the most beautiful, the most natural, and the most affecting of all ballads ever written, Virginia might have said, as she felt,—

"She look'd in my face, till I thought my heart would break."

The situation of the daughter became every day more and more painful, and she at length threw herself on the generosity of Rainsford, to be relieved from her obligation of secrecy.

"I cannot live in this way much longer. I have never before had a secret from my parents, and the thought of living every day in their sight, sharing their affections, receiving their bounty, and having that in my heart which I dare not, or at least am not permitted, to disclose, sickens me of my life. I cannot look them in the face without a consciousness that sinks my eyes to the ground, and they know it. I can disclose our engagement without—without betraying your—the reasons for postponing—I—I—you know what I wish to say, though I cannot say it."

Rainsford struggled with his feelings for a while, and then answered,—

"Virginia, I will not be the cause of more suffering to your gentle spirit than *must* be the inevitable result of our engagement, for a time at least, until—until my fate is decided. But consider, dearest girl, that unless you tell all, you will still have a secret—and such a secret!"

"Yes, but my heart will be relieved from its heaviest burthen, a wilful, unnecessary denial of confidence. Cannot I tell *my* secret without exposing yours?"

Again Rainsford struggled with his insuperable horror of disclosing, or consenting to any measure that might possibly lead to a disclosure of his family history. But the generosity of his nature at length overcame the selfish feeling, and he consented that she should tell all, and in her own way. "But," added he, "I foresee that it will lead to our everlasting separation."

Virginia sought her mother, sat down to her sewing, made sad work of it, pricked her finger, and screamed a little, as young ladies are wont.

"What is the matter?" asked the old lady, pushing her spectacles up on her forehead.

"My dear mother, I have a secret to tell you. O dear, how I have pricked my finger!"

"Is that your great secret, Virginia?"

"No, indeed, mother; but—but what do you think of Mr. Rainsford? Dear me, how my finger bleeds!"

"Why, I think Mr. Rainsford is in love with Virginia Dangerfield, and that she is not much behindhand with him."

"Lord, mother, how can you talk so? But what a fool I am!" She approached her mother, threw her arms about her neck, kissed her, and wept. But soon drying her tears, she began, with the dignified firmness of a virtuous maid, conscious that in disclosing the inmost secrets of her soul she had no occasion to blush or be ashamed. Frankly and fairly she told her engagement; but at the same time, being determined not to betray the history confided to her by Rainsford, unless it should become absolutely necessary to her peace of mind, she merely stated that their union was not to take place until the expiration of a certain period, and not then without the entire approbation of her parents.

"A certain period! and how long first, Virginia?"

"Why, that—that depends on circumstances beyond Mr. Rainsford's control at present."

"And what are they, my daughter?"

"I cannot disclose them, dear madam, as yet."

"You say—that is, he says, he is wealthy, of age, his own master; why should he wish to delay his marriage to an indefinite period?"

"That is a secret."

"I don't like secrets, my dear, nor postponements, without some good, sufficient, avowed reasons. I have no objection to Mr. Rainsford; indeed, since the obligation he conferred upon us all, I have wished that he might like you, and you him. But I cannot help thinking his conduct somewhat singular. Do *you* know his reasons, Virginia?"

"I do."

"And you dare not disclose them? Perhaps he will not permit you?"

"He has consented, if it should be absolutely necessary. But I—I confess, my dear mother, I had rather, and so would he, that they should be secret for a time. One day you shall know all. Either I will tell you, or—or circumstances will disclose it." And she sighed at the possibility that the latter might come to pass.

Mrs. Dangerfield shook her head.

"Virginia, I dislike the whole course of your wooing. Deceit is too often at the bottom of mystery. I cannot help suspecting that he is playing on the simplicity of your character, if not betraying the tenderness of your affections."

"Oh! no, indeed, mother; if you only knew all you would pity him, as I do." And she cast herself on the mother's bosom, and sobbed as if her heart would break the while.

"Forgive me, dear mother!"

"I do forgive you, Virginia; but your father must know all this; and now I think of it, he has not for a long time past appeared to treat Mr. Rainsford as a man like him seems to have a right to be treated by one on whom he has conferred so great an obligation. Have you any objection I should tell him?"

"None; I wished you to do so; and I should have told you all that you now know some time ago, but that Mr. Rainsford exacted a promise of secrecy, from which he only just now released me."

"Again, another secret!" exclaimed Mrs. Dangerfield, and she remained musing for some

moments. "But yonder comes your father; we shall see what he thinks of all this. Had you rather remain or retire while we talk over the subject?"

"I think I'd better retire." Virginia went towards the door, but returned, and, taking her mother's hand, looked up in her face with a bewitching, beseeching eye. "You are not angry with me, dear mother?"

"No, indeed I am not, Virginia." She kissed her affectionately, and they separated.

The colonel received the communications of Mrs. Dangerfield with rather a bad grace. There was something mysterious about Rainsford. He had come among them without letters; and though the hospitable habits of Kentucky rendered them quite unnecessary in ordinary cases, still he must know more of him before he consented to give him his daughter. It was true he had saved her life, and that entailed upon them everlasting gratitude; but still this was not a sufficient guarantee to his fortune and character. His professed object in coming here was to purchase and settle; yet he seemed to have neither inclination, nor habits, nor any thing else necessary to the success of such a plan; nay, he appeared to have almost forgotten that he ever entertained it. Besides, from something he had learned a good while ago of Zeno Paddock, he could not help sometimes entertaining a vague suspicion, which, were it not for the unspeakable benefit he had conferred on them all, would have caused him, Colonel Dangerfield, to institute an inquiry, which, if not properly answered, would have led to a

cessation of all further intercourse, if to nothing more. He did not feel himself at liberty to state what Zeno had told him. In the first place, it might not be true, for the man was a great busybody, and did not always talk gospel; and in the second place, if true, it only amounted to a surmise rather than an absolute ground of suspicion.

"I must know more of this mysterious young man, whom, however, I can't help liking for his intelligence and amiable qualities, independently of the obligations of gratitude. My friendship is, and my purse would be, at his service if he required it; but he has a command of large funds, I know; yet, when it comes to giving away my only daughter, it is another affair, and requires every degree of rational circumspection. I shall not fail to take advantage of the first opportunity that presents itself to ask him some questions about himself and his family, which I have never done before, because I don't think it becoming in a gentleman born in Old Virginia, and residing in Kentucky, to be inquisitive about a guest. It looks as if he was not welcome for himself alone, as a fellow-creature, as a mere man. But this is another affair. I have sufficient confidence in Virginia not to forbid their intercourse or break their engagement; but the marriage shall never take place with my consent till I know who Mr. Rainsford is, whence he comes, what is his family, and, above all, what is his character. In the mean time I shall have an eye upon him, though I confess it goes to my conscience to suspect a man for an instant without telling

him so to his face, and giving him an opportunity of vindicating himself."

The reader will perhaps observe a change in the character and style of Colonel Dangerfield when he compares his conversation and conduct with certain dialogues and incidents recorded in the commencement of our story. It is even so. Change of situation, duties, and modes of life do not make less impression on the mind than they do on the body. From the moment the colonel parted with his estate, his neighbours, and above all with Barebones, and dashed into the wilderness, his character resumed that native sagacity and vigour which wealth, indulgence, and, above all, idleness, had lulled to sleep with their syren lullabies. His mind rose with the exigences of the occasion; and whether as a soldier braving the dangers and toils of a forest war, a magistrate ruling the wild region around him more by the force of his personal authority than that of the laws, a father instructing or providing for the wants of his children, or a husband fulfilling the duties of a household divinity, he was equally an example. His old friends on the borders of James River would hardly have known him now; and we ourselves, intimate as we were with this worthy gentleman, cannot help sometimes almost doubting his identity.

CHAPTER IV.

Showing how Mrs. Judith Paddock was almost frightened out of her wits.

VIRGINIA took the earliest opportunity of disclosing to Rainsford the particulars of the interview with her mother, and he expressed his grateful sense of her delicacy in withholding the secret which it had been the great object of his existence to preserve. But he foresaw, and he told her so, the painful situation in which he had placed her, and at times lamented that she had not made a full disclosure. From this period he imagined himself an object of jealous suspicion, and perverted every look, and word, and action of the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield accordingly. Perhaps he was right; for though they preserved towards him all the appearance of outward courtesy, they could not divest themselves of that awkward embarrassment which is ever the product of the absence of confidence in those with whom we associate.

A few days had passed when, an opportunity presenting itself, Colonel Dangerfield took occasion to introduce the subject of the engagement which subsisted between Rainsford and Virginia.

"I will acknowledge, Mr. Rainsford, that all I have *seen* of you since you came to this part of the country has contributed to give me a fa-

vourable opinion of your talents and character, independently of the obligation you have conferred on me and mine. In other circumstances, and as an ordinary acquaintance, I should rest satisfied; but the relation in which you now stand towards my family makes it necessary that I should know more of you. You will therefore, I trust, not think me impertinent or curious if I now take the liberty of asking a few questions."

Though in general Rainsford was highly nervous and sensitive, there were occasions when he would rally himself into a lofty feeling of firmness and decision. In the latter spirit he replied,—

"Colonel Dangerfield, you certainly have a right to ask any questions you think necessary. I am sure they will be only such as your situation and mine render it proper for one gentleman to ask another. But I must tell you beforehand, there are questions which, *as yet*, I cannot, I do not feel disposed to answer."

"Very well; frankly, then, where have you generally resided before you came hither?"

"I cannot—I had rather be excused answering that question."

"Indeed! well, sir, may I ask the situation, circumstances, and character of your family?"

"I am the last of my family," said Rainsford, with a shudder.

"That is somewhat remarkable. I scarcely ever met a human being so utterly desolate as to be without relatives. You must have been very unfortunate. Are you a native of this country?"

"I am. I have some distant relatives, but have never associated or had any interchange of kindness with them."

"And you decline giving any information on the subject of your family or fortune?"

"My family—so far I will say—my family is respectable; and as to wealth, I have more than I shall ever have occasion for. The proofs I can produce at any time."

"I am not very solicitous on that point. But you must be aware, Mr. Rainsford, that I cannot give my only daughter away to a man who not only refuses to explain who he is, but chooses himself to propose delays, for which, though he has given her sufficient reasons, he does not condescend to explain to my satisfaction."

"Is not this very proposal of delay a proof that I mean neither to wrong or deceive either her or you? Did I intend this, I should hasten the completion of that happiness which I sometimes hope I may yet enjoy. Swindlers and villains fear nothing so much as time, which sooner or later lays open all secrets."

"True, that is assuredly true," replied the colonel, musing; "but still, Mr. Rainsford—I will be plain with you—still you must confess, if you know any thing of the world and of the intercourse of mankind, that the man who declines giving a reasonable solution to any course of conduct which is not within the sphere of ordinary motives and principles, justly lays himself open to a suspicion that his motives will not bear examination. It is not without

good reason that the great mass of mankind confound mystery with guilt."

"But, Colonel Dangerfield, may not there be misfortunes of such a peculiar and painful nature, that a sensitive being will shrink from disclosing them, as he would from the acknowledgment of a crime?"

"Certainly; but these instances are so rare, that no man has a right to complain if the world transforms this feeling of sore delicacy into the consciousness of guilt."

"Yes, I know that but too well."

"But, sir, to bring this home to ourselves: as strangers, we are not entitled to ask of you any disclosure that might be painful; as mere ordinary acquaintances, we would not wish it: but as the parents of a virtuous and, I must say, beautiful young woman, who has somewhat hastily intrusted her prospects of happiness to your future decision, I now inform you, once for all, that before the affair goes any further, we must and we will know who and what you are."

"I will tell you, in one word, a wretch; but not a guilty one. Colonel Dangerfield, do not take from me the hope of one day, if it please Heaven to spare me, calling Virginia mine. If you knew all, you would pity, perhaps you would shrink from me; it is that I fear, it is that which makes me shudder at the thought of laying open the sources of my conduct, the apparent mystery in which I have wrapped myself from all save Virginia. She had a right to know, and she does know it all."

'Some stale romantic story, I suppose," said

the other, contemptuously; "some tale of wicked indulgence, wrapped in the simulated language of the day, when a violation of the obligations of justice is called imprudence, and guilt softened down into misfortune. Some pretty device to steal away the pity of a tender, inexperienced girl."

"Would to Heaven it were! No, sir; you wrong me, on my soul you do. But let us end this painful interview. Colonel Dangerfield," continued he, with deep solemnity, "do you believe in oaths; in appeals to the Being who is all truth, all justice? If so, hear me assure you, as I hope for happiness hereafter, if not here; as I am a being possessing an immortal soul, which I here pledge to everlasting perdition if I say not the truth; hear me swear to you, that it is misfortune, and not guilt, which urges me to keep from you for a time the reasons for my conduct towards you and yours. They may be weak, unfounded, childish perhaps; they may be a part of my mal—but such as they are, I cannot overcome them just now. Yet before the throne of the great Governor of the universe, I here pledge myself that ere another year has passed away, you shall know all, and that in the mean time the confidence you have bestowed upon me shall not be abused. Dare you trust me thus far?"

"It is asking almost too much, sir; but when I call to mind that but for you I should have had no daughter, I cannot but confess that you are entitled to some little confidence." He reflected a few moments, and resumed,—"I will trust you; though even you yourself little

know at what a risk of one day being pointed at as the most rash and imprudent of fathers. I agree to your terms; in less than a year, you say?"

"In less than a year. Oh! sir," and he took the hand of Colonel Dangerfield, and pressed it; "Oh! sir, you cannot know my gratitude for this confidence; and—and Heaven grant you may never live to repent it!"

They separated, the colonel musing on this last wish, which sounded somewhat equivocal, and Rainsford bending his way to the domicil of Master Zeno Paddock, where sat Mrs. Judith in an ague, a very agony of curiosity. She had a sort of instinctive feeling that something had happened, that something would happen, that something was going on which she did not exactly comprehend, and she forthwith lashed herself, as it were, in nautical phrase, yardarm and yardarm, alongside of Rainsford, determined to sink him outright, if he did not surrender his secret. But alas! all her manœuvres for boarding failed. Rainsford was so deeply immersed in his own anxious and painful feelings, that he answered her like Hotspur, "neglectingly, he knew not what," and unintentionally perplexed her beyond all womanly endurance.

"I thought I saw you coming out of the colonel's just now; didn't I, Mr. Rainsford?"

He looked in her face with a blank vacuity, and replied to his own thoughts,

"One year more—yes—hum—and all will be known."

Mrs. Judith could make nothing of this.

"O yes, as you say, one year more, and then —we shall all be a year older." Mrs. Judith did not know exactly what to say, and, as usual in such like cases, talked nonsense.

"Perhaps not—perhaps after all it may not come to pass."

"Not come to pass that we shall be a year older next year!" screamed Mrs. Paddock, and the scream brought him to his recollection for a moment.

"We may be dead, you know," said he, smiling.

"Ah, that's true; that's clever; hah, hah! I declare you make me laugh, Mr. Rainsford."

"And yet," said Rainsford, relapsing, "it may be—hum—um—um."

"What did you say, sir?"

"All—yes—all my poor brothers went that way—and within a few months of the same age—um—u—u—m."

"Ah! yes sir, this is a scan—I mean a miserable world; we may die, or be robbed, or ose all we have in the world, and our wits into the bargain, before—"

"What do you say about losing my wits, woman?" cried Rainsford, starting up furiously, and glaring at her as if he had seen a ghost.

Mrs. Judith fled out of the room like a timid fawn, and, throwing her handkerchief over it to protect the head of Holofernes from the sun, "made tracks," as Bushfield would say, in a straight line over to the temporary residence of Colonel Dangerfield, where the first person she encountered was Virginia.

"O, Miss Phiginny! Miss Phiginny! such an accident has happened to Mr. Rainsford."

"What accident? tell me, Mrs. Paddock; quick, quick!"

"O, what a miserable world is this! O, Miss Phiginny!"

"For heaven's sake tell me," cried the young lady, "what, what has happened to Mr. Rainsford?" and she trembled and grew as pale as ashes.

"O!—O!—O, I declare I'm so frightened, and so out of breath,—O, who'd have thought it, poor young man!"

"What? what?" cried Virginia, in agony.

"Why, he's run distracted, as sure—"

Here Mrs. Judith was arrested in her speech; Virginia uttered one scream, and fell as if dead on the greensward of the little enclosure in the rear of the house, where she had been sitting under the shade of a spreading tree. Mrs. Dangerfield heard the scream, and ran out to see the cause. She found Virginia lying senseless, and Mrs. Judith wringing her hands, and crying out against this miserable world, almost, nay, quite unconscious of what she was saying. After some time and care, the young maiden recovered sufficiently to utter a few rambling incoherent words.

"So soon—it was not to have come yet. Poor, poor Rainsford, and poor Virginia."

Then seeing Mrs. Paddock, she raised herself up, and asked,

"Are you sure, quite sure?"

"Why I can't altogether say that he has lost all his wits but he talked as if he did not know

what he was saying, and looked at me as if he didn't know me from Adam; and then he called me woman, as if he meant d—l. But as I live, here he comes; who'd have thought it?"

At this moment Rainsford looked over the little paling, and invited Virginia to walk with him to the river-side. Mrs. Dangerfield would have opposed it, but Virginia insisted she was quite recovered, and displayed so much impatience of contradiction, that the kind mother acquiesced.

"My dear Virginia," thought she, "you are not what you used to be."

They walked a long while over the smooth meadows that skirted the river, and under the spreading elms and lofty sycamore-trees that here and there overshadowed the carpets of flowers, now putting forth their many-tinted products of the spring. Rainsford inquired the cause of her temporary indisposition, to which he had heard her mother allude; but she evaded the subject, fearful of giving him pain, and by so doing inflicted perhaps a greater. At length, urged beyond her will to resist, she disclosed the whole of Mrs. Judith's communication. He shrunk with bitter and mortified feelings.

"Yes, every one sees it coming; every one will know it soon, and fly from me as they did from my poor father and brothers; as this foolish woman did from me. Art *thou* not afraid of me, Virginia?"

"Afraid of you!" and she gave him a look so innocent and confiding, that he once more revived to a perception of happiness. They

suffered their anticipations to pass the critical period which it was supposed would decide the colour of their future days.

"If," said he, "as now I sometimes hope it will be,—if all goes well with me, till the dark line of my fate is safely crossed, shall we not be happy, Virginia? I am sure we shall; for art thou not all beauty, and purity, and intelligence; and shall not I be the greatest brute that ever abused the generous reliance of woman, to repay such a confidence as was never yet reposed in man, with any thing but love, reverence, devotion, adoration? Yes, yes! in the words of the poet of tenderness itself,

> 'We'll live together like two wanton vines,
> Circling our souls and loves in one another;
> We'll spring together, and we'll bear one fruit;
> One joy shall make us smile, and one grief mourn;
> One age go with us, and one hour of death
> Shall close our eyes, and one grave make us happy.'"

They sat on the same mossy rock, and the same hallowed silence of nature breathed around, as when he had told his sad history, and disclosed his melancholy love. The time, the occasion, and all the still sublimity of nature, were calculated to call forth the most lofty as well as tender associations.

> "At such a time the soul oft walks abroad,
> For silence is the energy of God!"

The peevish and evanescent excitements of noise and motion, the petty feelings awakened by the glittering pageantry of worldly pomps,

fade into insignificance compared with the holy inspiration of a scene like this. The imagination becomes swelled by those kindred conceptions which the vast concave arch above, the various and magnificent world lying basking all around, awaken; and nothing selfish, or mean, or wicked can enter a well-constituted mind, while contemplating the glorious works of a Being all purity, grandeur, and beneficence.

The mind of Rainsford seemed to take wing to the highest heaven, and to revel in the most glorious perceptions. With the mingled feeling of poetry and philosophy, of love and devotion, he expatiated on the beauty of nature, the chaste delights of virtuous affection, the labours and triumphs of well-aimed genius, and the crowning gift of immortality bestowed upon it here and hereafter. Virginia sat beside him, leaning forward with downward face; her eye raised to his in mingled admiration of his lofty flights, and fear lest he should overleap the slippery pinnacle of reason, and topple down headlong on the other side. She trembled at the dizzy height to which he sometimes soared, and her fearful anticipations pictured him as just shivering on the verge of the almost imperceptible line, the very hairbreadth space which, in the sensitive empire of the brain, separates the fruitful region where the elements act in sweet accord and all is universal harmony, from that of chaos, where nothing but shapeless monsters and jarring atoms abide.

A feeling of exquisitely mournful tenderness came over her soul, and the tears flowed down

her cheeks as she gazed on his face, which was become pale with the labours of the mind. He observed her, and suddenly stopping his career among the regions of the upper world, softly asked,—

"What ails thee, Virginia? Do not be frightened; I am not gone yet, whatever I may be, or whatever Mrs. Judith may say. For the first time since I began to live only in the bitterness of anticipated wretchedness, for the first time I have this evening suffered myself to hope for better things, and the new guest has made me almost giddy with delight. Yes, we shall yet be blessed together."

At that moment the same shrill, cold quaver they had heard on a former occasion thrilled across the purple waters.

"Let us go home," said Virginia; and they returned without exchanging another word.

CHAPTER V.

Showing how a pocket-handkerchief may be fatal to other persons besides poor Desdemona.

Mrs. Judith Paddock, the mirror of village gossips, went home with a bee in her bonnet, which buzzed at such a tremendous rate that she was nearly deprived of her wits. That there was some "mystery and grand" she was convinced; something between her lodger and Miss Dangerfield, which she could not fathom with the full-length line of her curiosity; and this being one of the few secrets that had ever eluded her sagacity, she was only the more fervently stimulated to get at it by some means or other. She went cackling about the village like unto a venerable old hen which has lost its last chicken, uttering mysterious innuendoes, and throwing out random hints, which set the ears of her sister spirits buzzing almost equal to her own. The spinning-wheels stood stock still; the pots and kettles boiled over; the panting labourer, when he came home to dinner, found it overdone, or not done at all; and the pussy-cats skimmed the cream of the milkpans with perfect impunity. Such are the dire consequences of a secret in a country village!

Two other important events took place during this remarkable spring, this *annus mirabilis*:—Colonel Dangerfield commencing rebuild-

ing his house on a great scale; and Master Zeno Paddock, having appointed a regent to preside over his classical academy, departed for the purpose of preparing the wherewithal to commence his Daily. No marvel every thing but talking and wondering was at a stand in Dangerfieldville.

In the mean time, the watchful tenderness of the mother became every day more and more excited by the situation of her daughter, and the conduct of Rainsford, whose mind gradually resumed its vicissitudes of deep depression and causeless exaltation. A mere trifle will change the tone of such a mind as his, and bring it back again to its wonted course, with a reaction which gives new vigour to former impressions. The tolling of a bell, the whooping of an owl, the song of the whippoorwill, heard of an evening or at midnight in the solitude and silence of the country, will, to some minds, and in particular circumstances, bring a train of melancholy forebodings that strike hard upon the chord which is most apt to vibrate to presentiments and ideal terrors.

The whole course of Rainsford's life had predisposed him to melancholy and superstition; for years he had brooded over one single idea, on which every thing he heard, or saw, or felt bore with a force more or less painful or prophetic; and the same shrill, menacing warning, which time and the belief of a large portion of mankind have consecrated to evil omen, occurring twice, under almost the same circumstances, and on the same spot, at once demolished the temporary fabric which a new-born hope had

reared to his future happiness. In fact, the relaxed state of his mind could not support the tension it had undergone, and the momentary perception of bliss, like a stimulating medicine administered to worn-out nature, only contributed to increase his ultimate depression. Impelled by that fatality which so generally attends on minds of his cast, instead of using every effort to withdraw from the contemplation of the painful idea which almost ever occupied his thoughts, he commissioned Zeno Paddock to procure him certain mischievous books treating of the causes, symptoms, and remedies of the malady which had so long haunted his imagination. When that worthy returned, as he did after an absence of a month, Rainsford might be seen poring with intense and harassing interest over their pages, where, as might be expected, he found enough to strengthen his habitual convictions; for it is only in extremes that the madman differs from the sage.

Poor Virginia now felt the truth of the universal maxim, that every thing, even the most indifferent in itself, brings to the apprehensive affections more or less cause to believe what we fear as well as what we hope. Every little eccentricity, every burst of feeling, every flight of fancy, which, but for her predisposition to apprehend the worst would have amused or delighted her, now carried with it a cold chill of apprehension, and kept her for ever on the rack of fear. This painful state, while it worried her to the very soul, gradually increased her interest in this intelligent, amiable being,

and she watched him with more than a mother's anxiety as the period approached which he looked forward to as the crisis of his fate.

The election of members of the State assembly was now approaching, and Leonard Dangerfield, having received the last fine edge of the law at the capital, was expected home ere long to canvass for the honours of a seat. It therefore behooved Master Zeno to bestir himself, and get his Daily in order to support the claims of the young gentleman against the opposite candidate, who had already taken the field. The greatest, certainly, and in all probability the happiest, man in all Kentucky was Zeno on the morning in which the first number of the "Western Sun" shone in the village of Dangerfieldville. His importance, not only in his own eyes, but the eyes of his fellow-citizens, was increased at least five hundredfold; that being about the number of readers to whom his opinions from that time forward were destined to be little less than gospel. He began by modestly regulating the affairs of the general government; professed his determination to judge for himself, and decide according to the dictates of conscience; let fly a tremendous shot at the editor of the Eastern Star for differing with him in opinion; and concluded by criticising an almanac, which, being the only book ever published previous to that time in the village of Dangerfieldville, was entitled to special notice. We should not like to have been in the shoes of the unlucky philomath who compiled it; for it was a new court-party almanac, and Zeno be-

longed to the opposite side. He accordingly cut it up terribly, and for ever destroyed its reputation among the people, by proving that it had already rained six times when the author had pronounced the weather would be clear. Having demolished this caitiff, he strutted about famously, and began seriously to contemplate upsetting the "new court party."

In a little time a dreadful war raged between the Western Sun and the Eastern Star, insomuch that, had they only been nearer to each other, there is little doubt but that they would have been a great deal more civil. The village of Dangerfieldville had heretofore been a quiet, peaceable village, disturbed only by the incessant cackle of Mrs. Judith; but now, since the sceptre of public opinion was seized by the great Zeno, his wife waned into comparative insignificance. The torch of discord was waved by a greater than she, and in the course of a few weeks two duels and six rencounters took place in various parts of the neighbouring country, all of which might be traced to the agency of the "Western Sun." It was generally thought that Zeno and he of the Eastern Star would certainly have measured pistols, if they had not been providentially separated by a great forest. It was whispered, however, that the former had scruples, in so far that though he didn't mind giving offence, it ran against his conscience to make atonement or give satisfaction. In truth, he was a right moral man, whatever the Eastern Star might aver to the contrary.

He was getting to be cock of the wood when Leonard Dangerfield returned home, a most

proper man as was ever *raised* in the regions of the west, so fruitful in fine specimens of the human species. He was about six feet high, and as straight as an arrow; his limbs were of the finest proportions, such as are not common elsewhere among men so much beyond the usual size; and he had the same perfect command of them as a young spirited blood-horse has of his. His features, like his carriage, were bold, manly, and indicative of a perfect self-confidence; and his eyes, though of blue, had rather too much of that daring expression which is one of the characteristics of perfect freedom. As a physical being, a mere animal man, he did honour to the rich soil and pure air in which, though not produced, he had grown up and flourished; for there was an admirable expression of strength and activity in his form and limbs, without the least approach to what is aptly and expressively called clumsy. Nor did his mind lack fellowship with his body, for he possessed courage, energy, decision, enterprise, and sagacity. Add to this, like almost all the gentlemen we have ever seen from this portion of the United States, he possessed a natural eloquence, a flow of words and ideas which perhaps originate in the fact that every young man in the west looks forward to political life and political distinctions, which can very rarely be obtained without a command of that great weapon which in a free country wins its way more certainly than the sword.

The people of the United States have been occasionally ridiculed for the warmth and eagerness with which they participate in elections

and other political contests of less importance. Yet this perpetual solicitude about public affairs is one of the great characteristics of liberty; and provided it does not extend to actual violence, nor to the disruption of kindred and social ties, is a wholesome and indeed essential ingredient in the composition of a free people. Without this deep interest, which instigates them to a perpetual watchfulness of their rulers, and rivets their attention so closely to the acts of their government, there would be no security against those quiet, insidious usurpations which power is perpetually making on the rights of mankind.

For ourselves, we are pleased that our countrymen are agitated occasionally by the wave of politics, and hope never to see the day when they shall become indifferent to the acts or the character of their rulers, or neglect the exercise of their great right of expressing their opinions freely and fearlessly. And though we do not admire female politicians, we as little like to see a woman without patriotism as without religion. It has often been a subject of regret to observe that natural love of aristocracy, title, precedence, and that disgraceful foible of giving a preference to foreign fashions, manners, and countries, which are among the characteristics of the more vulgar and ignorant of those females who aspire to distinction in the *beau monde*. The love of country in the mind of a virtuous, reflecting, intellectual woman should come next to her faith, her domestic affections, and her attachment to home. It ought never to mingle in party dissensions, or become the common

topic of her thoughts or conversation; but, like the pure light of religion, it should be a quiet, deep-rooted, unobtrusive principle, worthy of every sacrifice except that of the virtues which constitute the divinity of the sex.

The great day at length arrived big with the fate of Leonard Dangerfield and Miles Starkweather, each a candidate for the wayward affections of that wayward sovereign the king people. The sturdy freeholders of the west, as they are pleased to say, with some little degree of reason on their side, have no idea of buying a raccoon in his hole. They like to see the candidates face to face, to shake hands, talk, crack jokes, and maybe crack a bottle with them, before they assist in making them their temporary masters, or, for the word master grates on the ear of a freeman, their representatives. Above all, they must hear each one make a speech, if it be only from a stump, before they say ay or no to his pretensions. On this occasion, therefore, the opposing candidates attended the poll, and gave in their creed of politics. Leonard advocated the "old court" in a speech of two good hours, and the sovereigns hurraed, and pronounced him "transcendent."

"I'll be goy blamed," cried one Rowland Harrod, a broth of a fellow at the polls, "if he don't speak as if he hadn't another minute to live."

The opposition man was born out of the State, and suspected of having a cross of the Yankee; which was a great disadvantage, for Kentucky inherits from Old Virginia a decided preference for orators and statesmen of her own "raising." But the worst of all was his propen-

sity to dressing too well, and always carrying a white pocket-handkerchief. Yet he had all the "new court" party in his favour, and was huzzaed most vociferously. There was no knowing which of the courts would carry the day, when a queer, wizened, weather-beaten old gentleman, called Colonel Trollope, with one eye, and a face of mortal obliquity, ascended the forum, videlicet, the steps of the court-house, and addressed the audience as follows:—

"Friends and fellow-citizens,—That man who has been just speaking to you, it appears to me, places great confidence in succeeding in his election, because he has a white pocket-h-a-a-ndkerchief. He means to touch in the exquisite spot, and has been flourishing this piece of white before your eyes to dazzle you. Didn't you see how he flourished it when he had nothing to say? when he was fairly up a tree, just like the preacher the Sunday before last? He got against a snag several times, and then he would roar out, 'O, Mesopotamia! Mesopotamia!' and one old woman cried herself into a conversion.

"But, gentlemen, I don't mean you; we are not old women; we are not to be coaxed with pretty words sweetened with maple sugar, and no meaning in them, nor dazzled out of our understandings with a white towel, for what I know. (*hurrah! wheugh! whoop!*) I say his gentility won't serve his turn here, nor his gar-broth. I'm for Dangerfield, though he hasn't got a white pocket-h-a-a-ndkerchief, and though he can't play on the piane. He's a man of good strong horse sense, and his sister can

make a pair of moccasins out of his old boots, I know, anyhow. Dangerfield knows what we want, and will do it. But this gen*teel*man of the white flag [*hurrah!*] would be sipping champaign, and studying fashions. We want no such members that sail under the white flag; no such exotics among us, that think they can't study their A B C at home. We men of the west are splendid executors of our own will, and don't want the aid of the white h-a-a-nd-kerchief. Damme if I don't believe he had a ring on his little finger!"

"O thunder! a ring! Dangerfield for ever. Hurrah! Dangerfield for me!" cried old court and new court; and the fortunes of Miles Starkweather, like those of the Bourbons, sunk under the white flag. In a few days there appeared in the Western Sun a paragraph headed "Glorious Victory! Waterloo Defeat!" as if some foreign enemy had been driven from our shores; and Master Zeno Paddock was observed to deport himself after the manner of a dunghill cock, that hath just frightened a greater coward than himself.

CHAPTER VI.

Proving that the fear of evil is the worst of evils.

During the progress of the events recorded in our last chapter, little apparent change had taken place in the outward deportment of Rainsford; but if it had been possible to penetrate the recesses of his mind, it would have been discovered, that as the period to which he looked forward as the crisis of his fate approached more nearly, his terrors increased. To those who watched him narrowly, as did the mother of Virginia more especially, there occasionally appeared inconsistencies in his conduct, distorted opinions, and an equivocal expression of the eye, that, all combined, produced a suspicion in her mind that all was not right with him. And indeed it was so. He enjoyed not the present, he shrunk from the future. The delight of being beloved, the beauties of nature, the prospect of happiness that seemed to await him, all turned to waters of bitterness when connected with the dark and dismal prospect which closed the train of anticipations.

"How beautiful," exclaimed Virginia, one evening as they were contemplating the glowing splendours of the setting sun, reflected in the clouds, in a thousand glorious tints, which baffle the power of language, and bid defiance

to the colours of the most cunning artist. "How beautiful! I never look on such a scene as this without feeling a capacity to enjoy the blessings of Providence with a sweeter relish. I seem to identify myself with all nature, which looks so smiling and happy that I cannot help sympathizing with her."

"How different it is with me," replied Rainsford, in a melancholy tone. "To me the sunshine, the shade, the flowing river, the smiling earth, the starry heavens, and all the glorious panoply of nature, are but as dear objects, dear friends with whom I must soon part for ever. As I look on them, I am reminded by the fiend that is always at my elbow, whispering in my ear, that the time is now at hand when, in all human probability, this combination of order and beauty, this masterpiece of the Divine Architect, teeming with subjects for reason and fancy to dilate upon, and exhibiting to the senses all that is lovely to the eye, sweet to the smell, harmonious to the ear, will be to me but as a howling wilderness, a chaos like my mind, in which atoms will war with atoms; and where the throne of the presiding Divinity will be buried in its own ruins. The wretched being who stands under the gallows, on the brink of atoning for his crimes, might as well expect to enjoy the last light of the sun, or the first breath of spring, as I."

"O Rainsford! I thought—I hoped you were looking forward to happiness!" said Virginia, deeply affected with his melancholy. "For my sake, for your own sake, I beseech you to

struggle with such dreadful anticipations. It is not certain, nay, I feel a presentiment it will not be. Exert yourself, dear Rainsford."

"I do—I have. Never man sustained such a struggle as I have done, as I do now, and every moment of my life. Sometimes I succeed in whipping the hovering demons from my brow, but they come again, and find me only the weaker for my useless victory. Sometimes, as in a dream, I am taken up and carried away to the regions of hope, but, like the prisoner enjoying a few minutes respite from his dungeon, it is only to be brought back into darkness, the more dismal from the contrast of light he has enjoyed. Sometimes I lose for a moment the clew of my eternal thoughts, but it is only to find it again, and be dragged along with greater violence than ever." He paused awhile; Virginia could not answer for her emotions.

"Virginia," continued he, with a sad solemnity, "I must leave this place at once, and for ever; or at least until the hour is past. You, that have known and cherished me as a rational being, worthy to be one day the guardian of your happiness, must not see me when I shall, in all human probability, become an object of fear, horror, disgust. No, no, you shall not see me gnash my teeth; foam at the mouth; twist myself into a thousand contortions; roar—rave—blaspheme, tear my flesh; bite the dust; and, perhaps, in some cunning paroxysm, escape the watchful eye of affection, only to commit violence on those I best love."

"O don't talk so, don't talk so! or I shall go mad myself," cried Virginia.

"Ay, madness is catching; it runs in the blood they say. But surely a wife cannot take it from her husband. If she can it will be a rare conjunction, you and I. Whoever is born under it will be a philosopher."

"What—what are you talking of, Dudley?"

"Ay, true—I am only taking a step before old time; but there's no occasion, it will come soon enough—no danger of that—for they say, they *do* say—"

His wanderings were arrested by an exclamation of anguish from Virginia, who sunk down on the ground, overpowered by the terrible conviction that his malady had in truth come upon him. He placed his hand on his brow, rubbed his eyes, then knelt down beside her, and by degrees came to himself again.

"I was only jesting, Virginia. I am not mad yet, indeed I am not. I was only rehearsing the tragedy," added he, bitterly.

"Then let me beseech you, never to jest with me thus again. I am not lead, nor marble, nor a fool, to be thus played with. O, Rainsford, spare me such jests in future. I cannot bear them."

He led her to a seat, and proceeded,

"We must part, Virginia; I feel if I wish to spare you the last drop in the cup of bitterness, we must part at once. If my calamity overtakes me here—"

"And what if it overtakes you elsewhere?" asked Virginia, suddenly interrupting him.

"No matter; it will be among strangers, or perhaps in some wild solitude of the woods

where I can perish without exciting disgust and horror. They may find me some day or other, but they cannot tell my bones."

"Why, why will you talk thus? But listen to me, Rainsford; I do not, I cannot believe in the truth of your presentiment. I am satisfied if you can only keep your mind from the anticipation, the reality will never come."

"Ay, there's the difficulty; perhaps that very anticipation is a part of my malady?"

"Well, whether it be or not, if the worst should come, the worse it is the more you will require some one to watch over you; to abide by you in your hours of depression; and to assist in all that may administer to your comfort. I owe you this good turn and will pay it."

"You, you, Virginia, with those delicate fingers, those slender limbs, that soft and gentle heart! No, no, I must have chains, and giants to put them on. Go, go, tell your parents all, and let them drive me away, for I am bitten, as sure as there is a Providence above us whose decrees are irreversible. I heard a voice last night telling me to make my peace with Heaven, while yet I was responsible for my acts: and I will do it. I'll go to church to-morrow, and pray that I may die without the guilt of blood upon my head or hands; and then, the day after, bid you all farewell, and launch my boat among the stormy billows of the world, haply without rudder or compass to direct her course. Perhaps some time hence you may hear of a starving, ragged wanderer, roaming among the distant regions, chattering disjointed nonsense to a troop of ragged boys, and having

no owner to claim him. Wilt thou shed a tear then, Virginia?"

Virginia could not answer. She was silent, motionless, in the numb palsy of despair. The conviction of his ultimate fate had come upon her, and hope took its flight for ever. She grasped his arm with trembling hesitation, and begged they might return home. That evening the conduct of Rainsford was so strange, and he spoke so confidently of going away soon, that both the colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield were surprised, anxious, and almost offended. The depression, the paleness, and the traces of tears on the face of Virginia also caught their attention; and when the young man retired, and Mrs. Dangerfield sought her room, the unhappy girl followed, and throwing herself into her arms, sobbed as if her heart would break. She told her mother all, and the mother discreetly, tenderly, yet firmly, advised her to let Rainsford go; nay, to encourage his going; the sooner the better.

"Were it poverty, sickness, imprudence, any thing but guilt," said she, "I would not urge you to break your engagement. But this, this is too terrible; no pledge, no obligation ought to be considered binding in a case like this; since nothing can be more certain, my dear, than that, without administering in the least to his happiness, you must inevitably sacrifice your own."

"But, dear mother, perhaps my presence, my affectionate attentions, my watchful cares, my never-ceasing kindness, might do something towards his happiness. It may be only a con

stitutional melancholy, what I have heard called hypochondria; and physicians say, that the best way of curing this is to call up agreeable impressions and anticipations. Let me try; do, dearest mother!"

The mother sighed, and shook her head.

"Ah! Virginia, yours are but the dreams of youth—and female youth. To you, and such as you, love is the soul of existence, the object and the end of life. It can do all with you, and you think it can do the like with all. But there are miracles it cannot perform, and this is one. Know you not that when the mind is fairly unhinged, and swings with creaking harshness from its usual bearings, nine times in ten the objects of our dearest love become those of our deepest hate. Insanity distorts every thing, and this among the rest. It must be so: you must be separated."

"But whither can he go?" exclaimed Virginia, in anguish. "He has no kindred, no friends; nay, scarcely an acquaintance but ourselves; for his peculiar situation has kept him, he says, aloof from all association with his fellow-creatures. What will become of him should his malady overtake him among strangers?"

"Be not afraid, my dearest daughter. Go where he may, he will find good hearts to pity, and afford him all the cares and comforts of which he may be susceptible."

"Yes, a chain, a cell, and a grave," sighed Virginia; "a strait waistcoat, a cudgel, and a brute to lay it on."

"Necessity, my love, has no law of kindness or forbearance."

"Yet, I cannot but think that kindness and forbearance might often take the place of brutal force. Let me try, O let me try, dear mother! a little while, only a little while—until we see the end."

"The risk is too great; the penalty that may be paid for it too dear. Neither I nor thy father can consent to it. But enough for to-night, to-morrow all must be settled. Good night, my love; and may angels watch over thy innocence."

"Good night, dear mother." She kissed her mother, and reposed her head a moment on her bosom. "Good night, dear mother," repeated she once more, and slowly left the room. She sat a long while at the window, pondering over her unhappy situation, and shuddering at the prospect before poor Rainsford. Nature seemed to lower in sympathy with her sad forebodings, for the night was one of pitchy darkness and death-like repose, save when the flashes of ziz-zag lightning passed like fiery serpents, with forked tongues, athwart the lowering clouds rearing their heavy volumes above the cliffs on the other side of the river, followed by the distant thunder, which ever and anon grew louder, and more near. By the light of one of the flashes she thought she saw a figure, stalking near the window which looked out upon the little greensward. She was somewhat alarmed; when a well-known voice addressed her in an under tone.

"Virginia, know you what day of the week and month this is?"

"Saturday, the tenth of May," she replied.

"Ay, I thought I was right in my reckoning; it is the glorious anniversary,—it is the day on which my last brother, the last of all but me, died, as I shall die."

"O, don't break my heart! go home, I beseech you, Rainsford. The storm is coming across the river, and you will be drenched with rain. Quick, quick, there's not a moment to be lost."

"Well, let it come; the rain will cool my brains, and if the wind should be strong, it may blow down some high tree, and dash them out. Farewell, farewell."

She saw him dart away into the forest, and the gentle, blessed guest, the cherub sleep, visited not her pillow that long melancholy night, during a great part of which the heavens seemed on fire, and the earth shivering beneath the crash of the angry thunders.

CHAPTER VII.

"O, he's a screamer!"
MISSISSIPPI BOATMAN.

THE following day being the Sabbath, the village of Dangerfieldville was in a state of great excitement on account of the arrival of a famous preacher; an event of no small consequence where so few novelties occurred to rouse the rural populace from the even tenor of their daily occupations. As happens in many parts of our country, there was a neat little church in the village, but no regular clergyman, and they were indebted to the occasional visits of itinerants for their opportunities of public devotion. These happened so seldom, that the arrival of a preacher was quite an event. All, therefore, flocked to the little church; some to while away the idle Sabbath morn, some to laugh, and some to say their prayers.

The church was filled when the preacher ascended the pulpit, and there might be observed a little flurry among the congregation, a low whisper, as they settled themselves in reverent attention to hear what he had to say. He was a tall, raw-boned, fleshless man, with an appearance of great physical energy; high cheek-bones, hollow cheeks, deep sparkling eyes, a pale aspect, a long face, and a profusion of stiff black hair standing almost upright

above his high forehead. There was something not only energetic, but intellectual about him; that species of strong unpolished intellect which sometimes performs such wonders in this world. There was a wild earnestness in his tone and gesture, as he proceeded in his discourse, which evidenced his sincerity and fervour; an absence of all attempts at rhetorical embellishment, which sometimes, nay often, approached to vulgarity, and while it created a shuddering thrill of horror in apprehensive minds, in others awakened a feeling of the burlesque. But with all this, there were genius, energy, pathos, and enthusiasm, we may say fanaticism, combined; and though undisciplined and unpolished, still their strength and force were perhaps only the more irresistible. He was the preacher of terror, not of religion; he relied more on the fears than the reason or the hopes of mankind; forgetting that the great Being who has made mercy the first of our duties, cannot have adopted vengeance as the first of his attributes; and that, in the language of a reverend bard,

"Thou, fair Religion, wast designed,
Duteous daughter of the skies,
To warm and cheer the human mind,
To make men happy, good, and wise.
First drawn by thee, thus glow'd the gracious scene,
Till Superstition, fiend of wo,
Bade doubts to rise, and tears to flow,
And spread dark clouds our view and Heaven between.
Drawn by her pencil the Creator stands,
His beams of mercy thrown aside;
With thunder arming his uplifted hands,
And hurling vengeance wide.
Hope at the sight aghast yet lingering flies,
And dash'd on terror's rocks faith's best dependence lies."

The moisture burst from his forehead, and rolled down his hollow cheeks; he writhed in the toils of his own sublimated energies, as he proceeded. He first drew a picture of the vengeance of Heaven even in this world, where it was supposed offenders escaped its justice; he painted, in colours of exaggerated truth, the torments of a guilty conscience struggling with present pain, and the fear of future punishments, and how the decay of the body only added tenfold to the terrors of the dying sinner. He dwelt with a sort of savage exultation on the various dispensations of this world of guilt and misery; told how the wrath of the Almighty visited the sins of the father upon the children in a thousand hereditary diseases and defects, the consequences of *his* crimes and unbelief. To some he sent the gout, to others he sent lameness, to others blindness, to others apoplexy, and to others he sent idiocy and madness; thus punishing generation after generation, by taking away from them the faculties they had perverted to the purposes of impiety and unbelief.

"Thus," exclaimed he, in a voice of thunder, "thus are the wicked deprived of their boasted impunity even in this world. But the world to come, the after world! the punishment the guilty soul endures throughout all eternity. Look! you don't see it, but I see it! I see you at this moment standing like children laughing on the edge of a high rock, on the very brink of eternal flames. The awful gulf lies yawning right before you, and yet you take no care to avoid it. I see you," and he leaned over the

pulpit and looked down as if in horror, "I see you tumbling down, down, down, one after the other; there you go, there! there goes a young man who thought because he was young he would never die; there! there goes a vain girl, who, because she had red cheeks, and sparkling eyes, and a snow-white bosom, dreamed that death would spare her, and the great Judge pardon her offences on the score of her beauty. And there! there tumbles a trembling old sinner, who, because he had lived to fourscore years, thought he would live for ever. And there! see how the smoke rises! but I cannot look any more," and he sank back into the pulpit and was silent a few moments, while the simple congregation sat stupified with terror. Suddenly he clapped his hands to his ears.

"But ah! my brethren, what is that I hear? It is in vain I try to shut it out from my eyes—it comes in at my ears. From the dark den of your suffering I hear the screams, the shrieks, the curses of tormented sinners. One cries, O it would be a happy thing for me if this tooth-ache of mine would last only a thousand years or two. Another prays that he may be let off for a hundred thousand years of gout—that is the glutton, the winebibber. Another beseeches the eternal ministers of vengeance, who stand with their ladles, throwing oil, and pitch, and pine-knots on the fire to keep it up, that he may have a drop of muddy salt water to cool his tongue. That is a man who thought because he was honest, and just, and loved his wife and children, and fulfilled all his worldly duties, he

would be happy hereafter. Miserable fool! I tell thee, my brethren, these are the devil's links, that chain the immortal soul flat down upon the earth, and keep it there. But what a howl was that! Did you not hear it? Ah! now I look down, I see who it is; that is a vain, conceited philosopher, who said, in the pride of his heart, there is no God, no hereafter, no heaven, and no hell. Ah hah! he knows better now. Hark! he is lamenting in the midst of his torments, that he had not been created a toad, a serpent, any crawling, filthy reptile of the mud and mire, rather than an immortal being, to suffer everlasting torments.

"My brethren, O! that you could be like a quill in the fire, to be shrivelled and burnt up in a moment. But no, you will writhe in torments, and still live, and every hour will add to your capacity to feel more keenly. You think, I suppose, you'll get used to it at last. But, believe me, you will not; you will feel ten thousand times the agony that the poor people did the other day, who were scalded to death in the steamboat. And then, oh! then, you will hear your dear friends howling beside you—your fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and your dear little children will be crying out to you for help; and you'll see them crawling about on billows of fire. And then, too, you will be thinking of the good things you have enjoyed in this world; the dainties, the vanities, the lusts of the flesh, and all those wicked delights you held so dear. You think I'll comfort you! I will be a witness against you. And if any one of you dare to appear before

the judgment seat of Heaven, I will turn you back, and send you howling to the bottomless pit of fire."

There was a strange, an almost supernatural force in the unstudied oratory of this singular man, which nearly overpowered the well-ballanced minds of the most staid and rational hearers. The day was sweltering hot, the little church crowded almost to suffocation; and these circumstances, combined with the stirring terrors of the ghost-like preacher, overpowered the nerves of many of the congregation, who gasped for breath, and cried out until nature, no longer able to support the mental, as well as physical exertion, subsided into a sort of quiet insensibility.

Rainsford had made his appearance at church. The absence of food, which Mrs. Judith declared he had not tasted for four-and-twenty hours, the harassed state of his mind for some time past, and his exposure to the storm the night before, had given him the appearance of one whose mental and physical energies had been most sorely tried. Virginia sat and watched him with intense anxiety. The declamations of the preacher seemed to shake his very soul; he could not become paler than he was; but she marked the convulsive twitches of his features, the terrible wildness of his eye, and the shudder of his frame, when the clergyman came to that part of his discourse, in which he spoke of hereditary insanity as the punishment of the crimes of the parent. Nor did she fail to mark the strange unintelligible look he fixed upon her, at the passage denounc-

ing the ties of affection, and the social feelings and duties, as the chains with which Satan fastened the soul of man to the earth, and prevented his realizing his immortal hopes.

He joined her after service, and they walked together. As is usual, they talked of the preacher, and the sermon, of both which Virginia expressed her disapprobation; but Rainsford appeared deeply affected by them. He seemed to be under the influence of the most sublimated enthusiasm; and had not Virginia now accustomed herself to shrink from every lofty flight, or daring plunge of his imagination, she would have been charmed with the glowing richness of his mind.

"It is a beautiful theory, Virginia," said he, "that of entire abstraction from this world, and all its occupations, feelings, sufferings, and delights. It makes us independent of joy and sorrow; and places us on a level with the beings of the upper worlds. To me it would be the lot, of all others, most desirable; for to him who is hopeless of happiness here, it were some comfort to be insensible to misery."

"But is such a state possible?"

"Most assuredly, Virginia; there have been men, ay, and women too, so self-sustained, or so supported by the divinity of faith, as to be insensible to all mental or corporeal suffering, save that which arose from the uncertainties of hereafter. Nay, they have cast away all the ties of kindred, severed the links of nature, sacrificed love, glory, riches, parental and fraternal affection, and became as spirits walking the earth, but holding no communion with it

or its inhabitants. I almost wish I were such a one. And I could be," cried he, his eyes almost glaring with awakened hopes, "I could be, were it not for one link that binds me to the earth; were that but severed, I might be little less than the angels."

"Would to heaven it were possible!" thought poor Virginia.

"What is your opinion, Virginia?"

"These things are above my thoughts; yet I cannot see how it is possible to live in this world, and abstract ourselves so entirely from it as neither to know nor care for any thing or anybody but ourselves. And if it were possible, it seems to me that this, after all, would be but the most refined selfishness. There are ties in this world that ought not to be severed but by death; duties which we cannot shrink from without blame; and enjoyments which it would be ungrateful in us not to taste in moderation."

"Ties! duties! enjoyments! Pish! Virginia, did you not hear what the preacher said? These are the devil's links. Yes, yes, he was right. With such a load of mortal trumpery on our backs, one might as soon attempt to scale an ice mountain perpendicular to the skies as gain the blessings of hereafter. For my part, I mean one of these days to go and live alone in a hollow tree in the woods, and not allow a squirrel or a woodpecker to share it with me. Ha, ha! what think you of the idea, Virginia?"

"As one unworthy the subject we are speaking on," replied she, in a tone of deep depression.

"The sublime and the ridiculous are as nearly

allied as life and death, time and eternity. An imaginary line separates them, and thus they become opposite principles, like the people of two nations divided by nothing, yet who scarcely seem to think they belong to the same identical class of quarrelsome curs. Ha, ha! Virginia, were you to die suddenly—I mean in an instant—by a flash of lightning, before you could cry 'God bless me!' do you think you would go to heaven?"

"I hope so, through Heaven's mercy."

"I'll warrant you—I'd swear to it! and thus there would be two souls saved at once. Thou art all innocence, dear Virginia; thy life has been, until I came to mar it, a blessing to thyself, a blessing to all around thee, *ay, all but me!*" and here he lowered his tone, so that she could not distinguish what he said. "To die now were to be happy; for who knows but when you come to be a wife, and all the worldly ties of marriage surround and trammel thee, thou mayst lose thy hold on heaven, and tumble to the earth? It were a great pity! Better to die now!"

"I don't comprehend you," replied Virginia, who had been listening with a vague yet fearful foreboding.

"So much the better, so much the better! Ha! yonder I see the inspired man; I must go and talk with him. I've a case of conscience to submit. It requires a man that can split a hair to decide it. When it is settled you shall know all, for the bliss of heaven must consist in the fruition of knowledge. Good-by, Virginia; thou art an angel, if not a martyr!"

He hurried off to meet the preacher, leaving Virginia saddened, perplexed, and terrified with his strange ramblings, which either meant nothing or boded mischief.

CHAPTER VIII.

Fanaticism.

RAINSFORD invited the preacher to a conference, in which the latter unwittingly, and without suspecting his object, said all he could to confirm him in the dark design which had been conjured up by his discourse of the morning. With the rash and fervent eloquence of an imagination almost as heated as that of Rainsford himself, he declaimed against the moral duties of this world, and arraigned the gentle ties of kindred, friendship, and love at the bar of eternal Omnipotence as impious lusts of the flesh, hateful to the purity of the immortal soul. He stigmatized the love of a beautiful and virtuous woman as one of the secret temptations of the enemy of man, to lure him from the pursuit of his everlasting happiness; and denounced the best affections of the heart as the product of its rank, incurable corruption. In short, they parted, leaving the young man a gloomy, thoughtful visionary, on the high road to the fury of fanaticism, and alternately the sport of reason staggering on its throne, of imagination exalted into madness.

By degrees he came to be fully impressed with the conviction that the misfortunes of his family were the ministers of Divine vengeance

for some great offence of his grandfather, and that the only way in which he could make atonement, so as to escape their fate and ensure his future happiness, was to offer a sacrifice of all his worldly affections on the altar of faith. After a struggle which increased and accelerated the natural tendency of his mind towards a total derangement, he at length convinced himself that Virginia was the great and fatal obstacle in the way of his salvation; and that by making a noble disinterested sacrifice of her, he would ensure his peace here and hereafter. A deep, stern gloom succeeded this conviction. He would sit for hours in one position and one spot, gazing with vacant look at some object of which it was apparent he had no distinct perception; he neglected all the common offices of life, his dress, his beard, his meals, and his sleep; and passed the whole day without uttering a single word in answer to the ten thousand questions of Mrs. Judith Paddock.

At the end of the third day his eye suddenly brightened, he started from his seat with a strange alacrity, and, concealing a dirk in his bosom, which he had brought with him from an idea that his journey might expose him to occasions when it would be necessary, he sank on his knees, appeared deeply engaged in devotion, and then walked briskly forth towards the dwelling of Colonel Dangerfield. Virginia welcomed him with a melancholy tenderness, and shuddered at the alteration he had undergone since last they parted. He invited her to enjoy an evening walk, and led her on by degrees to a spot on the river-side which could not be seen

from the house. He desired her to be seated, and, sitting down by her side, fixed his eyes intently on her face for some moments, with a strange expression that, she knew not why, alarmed her, not for herself, but him.

"Virginia," at length he said, "dost thou remember any sins thou hast committed, and not atoned for?"

"It would be presumptuous in me to say so; but this I believe I can say, that I have never sinned without being sorry for what I had done."

"I warrant you. I would stake a life ten thousand times more worth than this ragged remnant I possess, that thou art as innocent of all intentional offence to thy fellow-creatures or their Creator, as was the lamb which the old patriarch offered up instead of his only son. Dost thou believe in the efficacy of such sacrifices, Virginia?"

"I believe that there is a better sacrifice than this,—that of ourselves, our selfish wishes, and selfish passions."

"You say true, you say true," cried he, eagerly; "the welfare of the immortal soul, the interminable duration of eternity, must not be sacrificed at the shrine of the few short years, the few miserable enjoyments we can crowd into them. But to obtain the great blessing for which all men were created, some victim is necessary, and that victim must be spotless innocence itself. The wretched sinner can offer no atonement for others, for his own transgressions require all his blood to wash them out. The harmless lamb or the unsinning virgin can

alone atone for the wickedness of the race of man; and hence, in the early stages of almost all religions, calamities were averted or blessings obtained by the greatest of all testimonies—greater than the voluntary martyrdom of the saints—the sacrifice of an Iphigenia, the dearest, the bitterest proof of full faith in the religion they professed."

"But our mild, beneficent religion requires not these; it requires not to be consecrated by the shedding of blood."

"Not consecrated by the shedding of blood! What think you of the thousands of martyrs in almost every age and nation? of the innocent women and babes, the millions of human sacrifices which bigotry, ambition, avarice, and revenge, skulking under the mantle of faith and holiness, have offered up to the sword or the fire? Virginia! I tell you, Virginia, that all the enjoyments of this world, all the bliss of hereafter, is the price of blood!"

The young maiden shuddered at hearing these gloomy and terrible words, and beholding the wild expression of his eyes as he uttered them. She wished herself at home, and was rising to go, when he hastily exclaimed,—

"Not yet, not quite yet; a few minutes more, and you shall commence your flight. Come, kneel down and pray for me, as I will for you. Heaven knows I want the prayers of all good people. Come, pray for me, Virginia; wilt thou?"

They knelt down together, and together their orisons ascended to the skies. As Rainsford contemplated her pale and touching face, and

the calm expression of her reverent eye, cast upwards in the holy abstraction of devotion and love combined,—for she prayed for him she loved and pitied,—he thought to himself that now, now was the time; now that her mind was divested of all worldly dross, and her soul already half-way on its flight to heaven. Twice—thrice did he put his hand into his bosom; thrice he felt the sharp-pointed weapon; and thrice he shuddered and snatched his hand away, as if he had met the fangs of the rattlesnake. Virginia did not seem to observe him; her spirit appeared communing with intelligences high seated above the stars, that now one by one began to twinkle dimly in various portions of the heavens. When she was about to rise from the ground, he gently detained her with a trembling hand.

"Not yet, not quite yet, Virginia; let me look on you a moment longer."

She remained still kneeling, and looking in his face with a tearful eye, so mild, so confiding, so affectionate, that the wild purpose of his wayward intellect became every moment more difficult to execute. Again, however, the dark thought crossed his mind, which was becoming every moment more chaotic from the struggles it was sustaining, that if she lived he should still love her, and she him, and thus both their souls would be jeopardized by indulging in worldly thoughts, worldly enjoyments, and worldly pursuits, to the neglect of all others. "We will go to heaven together," thought he; and again he put his hand in his bosom; again he felt and grasped the weapon of death, while such was his fearful agitation, that Virginia

was overpowered with a feeling of tenderness and pity. She placed her soft white hand, now cold with her emotions, against his colder fore head, damp with the dews of agony, and exclaimed, in a voice of touching melody,—

"Poor, poor Rainsford!"

He took her hand gently away, and was about to put it to his lips, when, suddenly letting it go, he exclaimed,—

"No, I have sworn it, and will not die with the weight of perjury on my soul! Look, Virginia, yonder is the evening star, the star of love's queen, just hiding behind the distant hills."

She turned her head to look at the star, and as she contemplated it a few moments, he snatched the weapon from his bosom, raised it, and—

"It is impossible! it is impossible!" he cried aloud; "my soul shall perish first!" and, rushing into the adjoining wood, he disappeared, leaving Virginia to return home by herself; to ponder and mourn over his wayward eccentricities, and indulge her despair of ever being happy with him.

She found, in addition to the family circle, assembled in the parlour, the wandering preacher, Mr. Bushfield, and the Black Warrior, who had come to ask a supply of ammunition from the colonel, as was his usual custom. The Indians, however high-minded and independent in other respects, are, like all mankind in their primitive state, careless of the rights of property, extremely avaricious, equally prodigal, and notorious for asking for every thing. When a chief

introduces a young warrior to a white dignitary west of the Mississippi, his eulogium is as follows:—"He is a brave warrior, a great horse-thief, and very considerable of a beggar."

The itinerant and the Black Warrior were talking about the creation of the world, the former having made a dead set at the latter with a view of converting him. The truth is, he was one of those whose well-meant yet ill-timed zeal intrudes itself everywhere, and on all occasions. He seemed to think, and no doubt did persuade himself, that his profession emancipated him from the rules of propriety and good breeding which govern all well-bred people. He had already banished the cheerful hilarity, the innocent freedom which usually pervaded the social circle, and caused a restraint that destroyed all the pleasure of the little party. When Bushfield dwelt with his usual eloquence on the pleasures of the chase, the delights of living alone, and having nobody to stand in your daylight, he took occasion sternly to reprehend the sport as interfering with the ceaseless care which was necessary to the salvation of the soul. When Colonel Dangerfield spoke to his son of the charms of eloquence and poetry, the pleasures attendant on the acquisition of knowledge, he denounced all these as temptations of the evil one to detach us from the one thing needful. When Mrs. Dangerfield happened to mention the domestic happiness of one of her friends, and the attachment which subsisted between the wife and the husband, the children and their parents, he called all the domestic affections nothing but carnal lusts of the flesh,

leading us into the flowery paths of temptation. When the duties a man owes to his country and his fellow-citizens were insisted on, he placed patriotism in that class of worldly feelings which interfere with the more important interests of the immortal soul; and when Mr. Littlejohn lauded the delights of luxuriating on three chairs, he treated him as little better than one of the wicked. All this was said and done with an arrogant assumption of superiority, an air of harsh, uncompromising bigotry, which answered no other purpose than to make the most mild, amiable, forgiving, and lenient faith ever propounded to mankind appear directly the reverse of what it really is. Nothing is so unbecoming in a divine as the absence of humility; for how can he who arrays himself in the trappings of pride and presumption correct those vices in the rest of mankind, or enforce those precepts which his practice every day belies?

The Black Warrior was sitting near a window, smoking his pipe, a privilege allowed him by Mrs. Dangerfield, when the over-zealous man made a demonstration towards him. The Indian listened with great gravity and decorum, as the red men always do to what is said to them, while he was giving a sketch of the Mosaic account of the creation of the world, the deluge, the ark, and the subsiding of the universal waste of waters. When he had finished, the Black Warrior waited some minutes to allow him an opportunity of continuing if he wished, and then, taking his pipe from his mouth, gravely replied,—

"You white black-coats tell big lies. Him you call Adam no first man. My father long way off first man, and he was named in English *Sour Mush;* he father of all my tribe, and not Adam, as you say. Listen! the Great Spirit want somebody to live below here, and he say to my father, 'You go down yonder, and make people.' Well, he set out; at first he go very well; then, when he got little way farther, he go too fast, bang! down, down, down,—hardly fetch breath, he go so fast. Well, by'm-by come birds, and put their wings under him, and let him down easy, very easy, and put him softly on the top of a tree on a high mountain. Well, he set there one, two, three day, and at last he grow very hungry, want to eat mighty much, and he say so to the Great Spirit; and Great Spirit tell him, 'Blow, blow on the waters.' Well, he blow, blow, blow, till water only up to his knee down on the prairie. But he say to the Great Spirit, 'May as well be deep like before; nothing to eat yet, very hungry.' Then the Great Spirit tell him blow again, and he send the winds to help him. And he blow, blow, blow, and the winds come and help him blow till all the water go away. Then *Sour Mush* he come down from the mountain, and his feet make deep tracks in soft mud; and, huh! out jump buffalo, deer, elk, and all sorts of game, and so my father get plenty to eat. Then Great Spirit in some time send him a wife, who come right out of a cave in the ground; and so in a great many moons we got to be a great nation. Huh! think Indian

don't know who first man as well as white black-coat?"*

The zealous wanderer was "like all wrath," as Bushfield said, with the poor Indian, for thus asserting his ancient belief. He denounced his tradition as an invention of Satan himself, instead of viewing it philosophically in the light of a strong corroboration of the actual occurrence of that great deluge the dim and vague traditions of which seem to pervade the earli est memorials of every people of the earth.

* This is a genuine tradition of the Osages

CHAPTER IX.

Bushfield "trees a curious varmint."

The next morning was signalized by a visit from Mrs. Judith, that woman of evil omen, whom Virginia now trembled to see approaching. She came to announce the disappearance of Rainsford, and that he had not been at home all night. Virginia restrained her emotions on receiving this information, which excited the most fearful forebodings. There was in her heart a union of tenderness and firmness, more often found in women than men; and which, wherever found, is the parent of deep, silent, lasting impressions. A shiver of anguish shook her limbs, a paler hue abided on her cheek, and that was all. She dismissed Mrs. Judith, who denounced her in her private opinion as the most insensible of mortals, to be so little affected on such an occasion; and took the first opportunity of consulting Mrs. Dangerfield. The result was a communication to the colonel, which was immediately followed by a search for the lost wanderer. It appeared, from an examination of his room, that he had taken nothing with him, except the clothes he wore. Nothing remained to give the least clew to his intentions, or to indicate whither he had gone.

Colonel Dangerfield and Leonard lost no time in mustering the men of the village and

despatching them in all directions. But they returned, one by one, at different intervals, in the course of a few days, without having discovered the least traces, or gained the slightest information of the fugitive. Thus they remained in the most harassing uncertainty whether he had wandered no one knew whither, or had made away with himself, none knew how. We will not attempt to describe the feelings of Virginia, during this period of racking doubt; she made no display herself. To the eyes of the villagers, when they occasionally saw her, she appeared to be pursuing her usual course of domestic duties and avocations; and it was only the quick instinct of affection that detected the deep wound she had received. At the expiration of about a fortnight, a boat coming up the river from the Ohio, brought news of the body of a drowned man having been found about a hundred miles below, and though the description of his dress and person was vague and uncertain, there were circumstances enough to produce a conviction it was that of Rainsford. The particulars were cautiously communicated to Virginia, and received in silence. On the bosom of maternal affection she breathed a prayer for the repose of his immortal soul, and his name was mentioned no more.

But she did not think of him the less for saying nothing. She remembered his eloquence, his affection, his gentle kindness, his sufferings, and his death; yet she did not turn her back upon the world, because of a thousand blessings bestowed upon her, she had been deprived of one, though that one was the

dearest of all. Rainsford was seldom absent from her thoughts, and she grew, in time, to think of him as one whom, perhaps, the mercy of Heaven had snatched away from cureless misery, to the enjoyment of happiness. "Better that he should die thus, even thus, and be buried among strangers," she would say to herself, "than live to realize what he has so long anticipated."

Thus passed the time, and Rainsford was considered by all as no longer an inhabitant of this world, when one day as Bushfield returned to his home in the forest, after a long and unsuccessful chase, he found Mammy Phillis in great tribulation at having nothing to give him for supper. He had come home in none of his best humours, for this first disappointment had brought a conviction to his mind that the game was fast emigrating, and that he must soon follow.

"What have you done with all those venison steaks I left hanging up there, you greedy old 'possum?" said he.

"I no eat him, massa."

"You no eat him! who eat him then, I should like to know?"

"Why, gentiman did, tudder day."

"What gentiman, you beautiful snowball?"

"Him go out all day wid massa, and shoot nothin."

"What, Rainsford?"

"Ees, massa, here dis morning, and take away ebery ting he lay hands on."

"Why, you fool, he's been dead, I don't know

how long; he was drowned, or drowned himself in the Kentucky."

Phillis screamed. "Ah! den him must be him's spook. I tought he no eat like Christian."

"Pshaw, who ever heard of a spook eating?"

"Huh! I guess dem eat well as udder folks. I see spooks eat when I was in my own country. I see plenty dare. All black, jus like me."

"A black ghost!" cried Bushfield, breaking into a loud laugh. "I'd as soon think of a white nigger. But what are you talking about seeing poor Rainsford's ghost. Come tell me all about it."

By dint of questioning he drew from her the following details. It appears she was occupied in eating her breakfast, very intently, when on a sudden a man, who she persisted was Rainsford, bolted into the house, seized some of the victuals, and began to devour them, as she said, like a hungry wolf. He soon cleared the table, and then helped himself to all the eatables he could find, which he was carrying away, when he seemed suddenly to recollect himself, put his hand in his pocket and threw her some money, exclaiming at the same time, with a laugh, "There—there's the reckoning, the price of a priest's religion, a lawyer's conscience, and a patriot's vote. There, you angel of darkness, go buy a white skin, and then you may bear false witness against your neighbour, as well as your betters."

Phillis further stated that he was very ragged; had a long beard; a bloodshot eye;

and looked as if he were almost starved to death.

"Poor creature!" said Bushfield, drawing the sleeve of his hunting shirt across his eyes. "But I shall tree him to-morrow."

"What, tree spook?" chuckled old Phillis. "Ecod, I believe massa tink he tree any ting."

Bushfield went to bed, that is to say, laid down on his bearskin, outside the house, under a spreading tree, and slept as well without his supper as with it, for he did not mind such trifles as four-and-twenty hours' abstinence. In the morning, bright and early, before the dew was off the ground, he called unto him old Phillis, and bade her show him, if she knew, which way the spook went. She did so, and he whistled his dogs, placed them on the scent, and followed with his rifle on his shoulder. The dogs pursued a devious winding course, through the most difficult passes of the forest, until they reached a rocky eminence, which formed the dividing line between two neighbouring streams. It was a wild savage scene, remote from the usual haunts of the hunters. A signal from the hounds at a distance, indicating that they discovered something, caused Bushfield to hasten to the spot, where he beheld the Black Warrior, standing at bay, with his rifle pointed at one of the dogs, which was the most clamorous and troublesome.

"Don't hurt the sweet varmints," cried he, "or its likely I may hurt *you*, anyhow."

Bushfield "hated an Ingen mightily;" and, to do him justice, he had tolerable good reasons for it. But he would not have harmed one, ex-

cept in self-defence, as he called defending his dogs, on any account. He called them off, and they commenced a parley.

"Game very scarce now," said the Black Warrior. "Indian must soon go cross the great river."

"Yes, and white man too, if he wants to follow the track of the deer. Have you seen any game?"

"No, only squirrel, he no worth powder and shot. Has the white man seen any?"

"O, I'm on another track. I'm hunting a white man."

"Eh! I reckoned white man only hunted Indian that way."

Bushfield explained to him his object; and the Black Warrior offered his aid.

"I like Misser Rainford, he sometime fill my pouch wid tobacco."

"We shall only be in each other's way, like a couple of fellers in the same track."

"Room enough here for white man and red skin. White man want all room to himself," muttered the Indian. "But I must help find Misser Rainford."

They proceeded in different directions, after agreeing to fire their guns in case of any discovery; and had pursued their search for some time, when the forest echoed with the report of the Black Warrior's rifle. Bushfield hastened in the direction, and found the Indian standing guard at the foot of a high rock, on the very verge of which was a figure scarcely human, capering, and shouting, and looking down, as if in scorn of the intruder. Sometimes he

shook his fist at him, and grinned. Sometimes he would laugh aloud; and at others pelt him with sticks or stones. Bushfield approached close to the foot of the rock, and he seemed for a moment confused with some recollection, while he looked wistfully down upon him. He then shouted and disappeared; then returned again, laughing and capering like a child playing at bo-peep; and finally, sat himself down, with his legs hanging over the edge of the high rock, making faces at them.

Bushfield called him by name, and entreated him to come down to his friends.

"Ah hah! catch me at that," cried he, laughing. "I know what you want; you want to chain me; you want to clap me up in a dungeon, and set a tiger to watch me. No, no, I know a thing worth two of that. Whiz! look here," and he cut a huge caper, and sat down again. "Here I am, a gentleman commoner of nature. I can go where I please, and do as I please, without asking leave of the parson, the lawyer, the justice, or of those good people who would kill me with kindness to save my life."

"I'll be shot if he don't talk more like common sense than many roarers I have heard make speeches in court, in my time, anyhow. I think if I could only get a fight out of him, I'd bring him to, pretty quick," said Bushfield to his associate.

They consulted together on the best method of securing the wretched outcast, and at length finally agreed on a plan. It was obvious that he could not be secured where he was by any

mode of attack or approach; for the side of the rock nearest them was inaccessible, and, if assailed in the rear, there was great reason to fear he would dash himself down, and perish.

"Somehow or other," said Bushfield, "I don't think it a matter worth crying for if he did, anyhow. But who knows, after all, but the poor feller has some kind of pleasure in this sort of out-door life that I don't know any thing about? He's a free man, and that's something. He can lay down and drink of the *branch* without a cup, which is what I call being independent, anyhow."

As neither had any food with them, it was determined to go home, and return the next day with a supply, which they were to leave in a conspicuous spot near the haunt of Rainsford, in the expectation he would be compelled by the wants of nature to come and take it. Each was to hide himself in some convenient nook for intercepting a retreat to his stronghold.

Accordingly they took leave of the maniac, who told them to go and catch birds with fresh salt, and saluted them with a volley of stones, and returned to their respective homes. The next day they put their plan into execution, and awaited the result in their hiding-places. Some hours elapsed, and the poor wanderer did not appear. But about midday they heard his laugh, and presently after saw him approach the place where the food had been placed, which he seized and devoured with the eager avidity of a famished tiger. When he had done, he laid himself down quietly, and fell asleep at the foot of a tree.

Now was the time, and now the white man and the red put in practice the tactics of the warfare of the woods. They lay down on their faces, and crawled along like wily snakes in the grass, dragging their rifles after them, until within striking distance; when Bushfield, who never took odds, he said, against man or beast, motioning the Black Warrior to halt where he was, rose, and with the spring of a tiger pounced upon the sleeping Rainsford, whose arms he seized with the gripe of a vice, as he was wont to boast. A struggle now ensued, too violent to be lasting; after a few convulsive, phrenetic efforts, accompanied by demonstrations of ferocious anger, the strength of the poor maniac became quite exhausted, and he remained on the ground perfectly quiescent, as is the case with persons of this class when they find themselves fairly mastered.

He lay for a time with his eyes shut, and the Black Warrior now brought some fresh grapevines he had cut, for the purpose of binding his hands behind him; but Bushfield demurred to this.

"No, hang it, redskin, I could never yet find in my heart to bind a free white man. There are two of us; I'm half a whole team, and you the other half; and it's a hard case if we can't manage him without disgracing the poor cretur."

"True," said the Black Warrior; "and then the Great Spirit would be angry if we hurt him, for you know he loves all mad people can't take care of themselves. Great Spirit make prophet of 'em sometimes; love 'em very much. I most

forget that; glad I not lay hold of him like you. Never shoot deer any more if I hurt him."

"What ignorant Turks these Indians are," thought Bushfield, "to believe in such crossing of the track as this. I'm a nigger if I think this copper-washed man is a right clean, full-blooded feller-cretur."

Nothing is more passive than raging passion when once overcome. Rainsford now rose from the ground, and stood stock still, with a subdued look, and languid expression of the eye His head, legs, bosom, and arms were bare; and as Bushfield noted the bruises and the marks which he had been forced to inflict upon the poor youth, he felt his eyes grow dim. He took his passive hand, shook it with honest fervour, and, as if he thought himself understood, made his apology for having treated him so roughly. "If I hadn't sooner eat *garbroth* with a real nigger, may I never see a tree nigh enough to my house to make a fire without the help of a cart and oxen," said he. "But come, stranger, I think now you'd best go home again. There's the colonel and his lady are on the wrong scent about you, and Miss Virginia looks as white as an eggshell."

"Virginia?" said Rainsford, "Virginia? ay, Old Virginia. I've heard of her; she never tires, they say."

"Old Virginia! no, I mean young Virginia, the yellow flower of the forest, the sweetest sap that ever was boiled into maple sugar. O, she's a beauty, anyhow. Have you forgot Virginia Dangerfield, that I hear you were going to be married to when you cut this caper?"

"Dangerfield! yes, now I recollect, that was the name of the old beggar that cursed my grandfather; he that was once an old black woman that I stole venison from, and cooked it on a gridiron made of the ribs of a rogue that was gibbeted. Yes, yes—O, I remember it all as if it was the day after to-morrow."

"Then you will go with us?"

"To be sure I will. Give us your hand; your fingers are as soft as iron bars, almost as soft as Virginia's—I mean Old Virginia, that never tires. As I was saying—but you talked about going to be married just now, didn't you? Now, if I marry anybody, it shall be the black beauty I met t'other day, who gave me a good dinner; but she made me pay for it. Look here! what a grip she gave me!" and he held out his bare bruised arms.

"Come then with me, and I will take you to your friends, and they shall take care of you," said Bushfield, who long afterwards declared he never had felt so since the time he lost his mother and little sister at one shot.

"Well, come on; I'm a free man now, and ready for a frolic anywhere. But don't talk of being married, for that is the shortest cut to the devil; the parson told me so. Come, don't look as if I was lying about it. I tell you he swore to me once by—I forget what it was—by the sole of his shoe, that if the sky should happen to fall, there would be a great squabble about the stars. For my part, I should go for Saturn, because he falls the farthest, and is a great traveller. Hurrah, boys! come along; but here

Mister—what's your name?—O, Dangerfield—Mr. Dangerfield, you'll bring that old sexton there with you, because I expect to be married. It's curious," whispered he to Bushfield, "but I seem as if I remembered backwards, as a crab goes to church. Hurrah! come to the funeral, and then for the plum-cake and a lying epitaph."

So saying, he took Bushfield by the arm, and they went their way towards the village of Dangerfieldville, where they arrived in the dusk of the evening; Rainsford so fatigued, that he fell into a deep sleep immediately. Persons were appointed by Colonel Dangerfield to watch him, that he might not wander away into the woods again.

CHAPTER X.

A glimpse of sunshine darkened.

It would have been a wonder to distance all the other wonders of the world had Virginia remained ignorant of the discovery and arrival of Rainsford any longer than Mrs. Judith Paddock took to cross the way and tell the story. It is hard to say what were her feelings on this occasion, and for that reason we will not attempt to delineate them. She could receive no joy at his return in the state Mrs. Judith described, and still less could she find in her heart to regret that he had not perished in the manner before related. Certain it is, however, that she was observed to lose that quiet air of resignation which had followed the loss of hope; and from this time forward her watchful mother detected in her manner and conduct all the indications of a mind agitated by conflicting emotions.

The paroxysm in which Rainsford was found in the forest had arisen as much from hunger, exposure, and the miserable roots and berries he had subsisted on for some days, as from any predisposing cause. And he awoke the next morning, after snatches of sleep disturbed by occasional starts and ravings, in a quiet state of gloomy languor, which encouraged Mrs. Judith to venture on the gratification of her curi

osity, by paying him a visit in his accustomed room, where he had been secured for the present. He paid little attention to her or her questions, until, apparently wearied and fatigued, he looked sternly at her, and exclaimed,—

"Get thee behind me, Satan; I know you of old. You have been at me many a time before with that ugly black face and cloven foot. You needn't try to hide it or your face either; for if your husband's a fool I am not; I can see with half an eye you've got a split foot, and horns on your head, just like an ox."

Mrs. Judith was exceedingly wroth at this unseemly blunder; for well saith the great poet, "Use lessens marvel," and it is the happiness of mankind, as well as womankind, that by dint of frequent contemplation in the looking-glass, they not only become reconciled to, but peradventure enamoured of, deformity. We may call this vanity, but in our minds it is the true essence of philosophy; for where would be the use of pining over those infirmities which it hath pleased Providence to inflict upon us, and which all the regrets in the world, so far from alleviating, only tend to make ten thousand times more painful. To laugh at such delusions as contribute to the happiness of the unfortunate only shows the folly and ill-nature of mankind. We have before hinted that Mrs. Judith was, as it were, one of nature's most masterly blunders; but if she admired herself, so much the better for her husband; for it was the cause of a certain dulcet humour of which he reaped much of the benefits. But this sortie of poor Rainsford against her beauty irritated

her sorely, and she bounced out of the room, declaring that, however she might have doubted before, all the world would not persuade her now that he was not as mad as a March hare. The unhappy youth sat down and burst into a hearty laugh; but whether from a remote perception of the ridiculous or not, is difficult to decide. There is certainly a mischievous wilfulness in deranged intellects that has sometimes almost persuaded us that such a state of mind often consists less in the inability than the inclination to restrain its excesses. Anger is justly denominated a short madness; yet it is ever under the restraint of prudence, and we doubt if the most furious victim of that passion would dare to exhibit it in the presence of the man he feared.

Various were the consultations of Colonel Dangerfield with his wife and son as to the best mode of disposing of this unfortunate young man, with whose friends and former residence they were totally unacquainted. Dangerfieldville not being the county town, there was neither court-house nor jail in which he might be secured until he regained, if he ever regained, his reason; and it was obvious that the chamber of Master Zeno would be insufficient to retain him if he should be determined on escaping. It was proposed to insert a description of his person and situation in the Western Sun, in the hope of his being recognised by his family, if he had any; but to this Virginia, who often joined in these consultations, strenuously objected.

"If he should ever recover," said she, "I know

his sensitive feelings will shrink from such an exposure."

"Alas! I fear all hope of his recovery is vain," replied Mrs. Dangerfield.

"He who deprived him of his reason can restore it, mother."

"My dear child, you know not how difficult it is to heal the shattered intellect of a rational being."

"Not so difficult, dear mother, as to create a rational being." She paused, and resumed, in a hesitating voice, "Now that you are here together, I have a proposal to make, a wish to gratify, if I dared to ask permission."

"What is it, my love? said Mrs. Dangerfield.

"I—I wish to see Mr. Rainsford once—once more. I have a hope—a presentiment I may almost call it—that he would know me, and that I might sooth his calamity, if nothing more. Will you permit me to make the trial?"

"For heaven's sake! for our sakes, Virginia, abandon the idea. I shudder at the thought of such an exposure. Suppose, in a paroxysm of phrensy, he should tear you to pieces. Such things have happened."

"Ah! I fear him not, my mother. There must yet remain some little recollection of what—what we have been, and were to be to each other, that the sight of me, the sound of my voice will awaken. I beseech you, as you value my peace, I might say my life, to let me see him once more. I should never know the repose of a moment, if I were not conscious of having done all that my heart suggested to me as possible to awaken poor Rainsford to a recol-

lection of himself, if only for one moment. Let me, let me go, or perhaps I may become one day like him."

The solemn earnestness, the hope, however hopeless, with which she urged her request, at length wrought on them all to consent to her visiting the unhappy young man once more. It was arranged that the colonel and Leonard should accompany her, and remain just without the door, while she should enter alone. The mother inquired when it should be, and Virginia hesitated, and trembled for a moment, ere she uttered the single monosyllable,

"Now."

Leonard went over to ascertain the state of the patient; and in the mean while Virginia arrayed herself in a gown of spotless white, not whiter than her pale cheek and forehead, over which her chestnut hair was smoothly parted, in that most beautiful and simplest form of delicate womanhood. "I am ready," said she, firmly; and she took the arm of her father, and walked with a steady step to the place of meeting. When just outside the door she paused and faltered; but it was soon over; and the door being opened, she entered.

Rainsford, who had been persuaded to suffer himself to be dressed and shaved, in one of his good-natured intervals, was sitting with his back towards the door, his body inclined forward, and his head depressed on his bosom, employed in picking a little fragment of linen in pieces. He paid no attention to her entrance, and she had an opportunity of recovering her firmness, before she uttered, in the sweetest

music that ever floated on the balmy breath of spring, the single word,

"Dudley Rainsford!"

He suddenly whirled himself round on his chair; but it was evident the sound, and not the sense, had roused him, for he displayed no symptoms of recognising the person who gave it utterance.

"He has forgotten me!" sighed Virginia; and she was obliged to lean against the wall for support.

"What!" cried he, at length, after looking at her awhile; "what! are you come back again, with your cloven foot and horns? Don't you know I have sworn to put to death all the handsome Jezebels in the creation; because I have it from the best possible authority they keep more honest men from heaven than the very old boy himself. Go away, go away, or I shall fall in love with that deceitful handsome face of yours."

"Dudley Rainsford!" said Virginia, coming nearer, "don't you know Virginia?"

"What, Old Virginia? Yes, I think I have heard of such a trifle; but don't come near me, stand off; I don't choose to lose my soul for a woman, I can tell you. Though when I look at you, I think I might run the risk, for you put me in mind of a little angel I once saw in a dream."

Virginia approached yet nearer, and placed her hand on his brow. "What, you will come, hey! You're determined I shall roast, as the old black woman, that made me pay so dear for my dinner, said. Look here what a price for

a dinner." And he stripped up his sleeve, and showed the deep marks of the struggle with Bushfield.

Virginia could not speak, but she hung over him, and the scalding tears fell on his forehead. In those beautiful fictions of poetry and romance which are now almost overwhelmed by the barren exuberance of their successors, it has been fabled that the ferocity of the lion was tamed by the divinity of virgin purity and gentleness. Even so with Rainsford. He felt the tears trickle on his forehead; he felt the balmy breath breathing in his face; and all at once he seemed to be recalled to some faint yet organized traces of the incidents of his former life. He looked at her intensely, a few moments, then took her hand and kissed it, as he softly exclaimed,

"Virginia! are you not afraid of me?"

"O! he knows me now!" cried she, in a burst of joy.

"Yes, I do know thee; and I have broken the oath I made once. I remember—where was it? no matter, I am lost now. I see it. I am doomed to howl, howl, as the preacher said; and all because I didn't do it when I had so good an opportunity. But I am glad I did not, for I had rather howl than harm thee, Virginia."

She sat down by his side, her hand in his; and for a little while, apparently with continued efforts, he mastered his malady sufficiently to avoid incoherence. But the exertion was too great for him; by degrees he began to lose all power of arrangement; and the last effort of

his departing reason was to beseech, to command her to leave him.

"Go! go! it is written I shall shed blood; let it not be yours!"

The colonel and Leonard Dangerfield were alarmed at the increasing loudness of his voice, and showing themselves at the door, beckoned her to come forth. She obeyed them unwillingly; and the moment she left the room, Rainsford started up, shut the door violently, and exclaimed,

"There! there! now she's safe; and let me howl and welcome. Who says I'm not a hero to give away my soul for a woman?"

The interview, however painful to her feelings, was on the whole calculated to cherish a latent spark of hope in the bosom of Virginia. That he had known her; that he had for a few minutes, at least, enjoyed an interval of recollection, indicated that his mind was not irretrievably gone. Kindness, care, and perseverance might do much, perhaps might do every thing necessary to the restoration of his reason, and she had long accustomed herself to think that both affection and gratitude demanded all her exertions to save him. She accordingly settled it in her mind that she would repeat the experiment every day, as long as there remained any hope.

She communicated her wishes to her mother, who, observing her pale cheek, tearful eye, and agitated frame, was fearful such a plan would end rather in being fatal to her health, than effectual in regard to the unfortunate Rainsford.

She endeavoured to persuade her that seeing him every day would gradually undermine her happiness for the rest of her life, and destroy that strength of mind so essential to its dignity and usefulness. The reply of Virginia was as remarkable as it was true.

"My dear mother, I am young, but I have lived long enough, and suffered enough, to know by my own experience that those evils we shrink from are always the most terrible to the imagination. What we are not afraid to look upon we are not half so much afraid of as if we turned away from it in fear or horror. I had pictured poor Rainsford as a raving maniac, divested as well of the form of humanity, as of the attributes of reason; but I found him still fair and gentle, and can almost think of him with pleasure again."

"Well, then, my dear daughter, take your own way; for it is not the weak vanity of a mother, nor her childish indulgence, which make me say, that so help me Heaven, as I believe I might trust you everywhere, where intellect and virtue are the safeguards of woman."

CHAPTER XI.

A touch of scholarship, an elopement, and a discussion on equality.

It was one laughing morn in the merry month of June, when the redbirds sung, the grasshoppers chirped—we mean the crickets chirped, the grasshoppers flitted their circumscribed flights, the little yellow butterflies were solacing themselves in the moisture of the roadside, and the luxurious swine, the sole aristocracy of this republic, since they enjoy every thing without labour, banquet on the fat of the land, and are marvellously short-lived, were wallowing in the very mire of sentiment. It was on such a morning, for ever hallowed in our remembrance as the season of luxurious abstractions, delicious languors, and visionary flights of fancy,—it was on such a morning that the veritable Zeno Paddock and his wife were sitting at breakfast, sipping tea and politics. Zeno exchanged with one paper at least in each of the twenty-two states at that time in being, and read them all, every soul of them; by reason of which he had so many errors to correct, so many recreants to chastise, and such a mass of political heresies to expose to the world, that he hardly knew which way to turn himself. He was at this

moment poring over a number of his great antagonist the Eastern Star, when all at once he jumped from his chair, as if a Chinese cracker had exploded under his nose. Mrs. Judith was smitten with a tender curiosity, and inquired what was the matter; he handed her the paper, pointing at the same time to a certain article, and exclaiming,—

"There, there—he, he! Judy, what do you think of that? I'm a stunted pedant! I don't know a B from a bull's foot!—he, he!"—and he fluttered about in a paroxysm of wounded vanity.

It seems this learned Theban had in an evil hour essayed, in the triumph of his heart, to enact the critic on divers occasions, having been so successful in detecting the falsehoods of the new court almanac concerning the weather. He undertook to write an article on a volume of poetry published by a young man at Lexington, as we believe, in the which he made a desperate plunge into the bowels of antiquity. He first compared Aristotle and the Stagyrite in philosophy, giving it as his opinion that the latter was the deeper of the two by all odds. From thence he sallied out into the regions of "crack-sculled Parnassus," where he committed great ravages among the laurels and other evergreens. He asserted roundly that, whatever might be said to the contrary, there was no comparison between Homer and the great Melesigenes; that Virgil could not hold a candle to Maro; and that the Mantuan swain, who was a self-taught shepherd, was superior

to both. He pronounced Horace's Odes to be inimitable, and far more spirited than those of his great rivals Quintus and Flaccus; and concluded by pronouncing a certain pope of Rome, whose name he had forgot, though he believed it was Pope Alexander, the first poet among the moderns, partly because he was so easy on man, one of the most difficult of all subjects; and partly because he wrote a beautiful poem on a fellow stealing the lock of a door.

For all these multifarious offences his great antagonist of the Eastern Star did take him up roundly, denying all his positions, and pronouncing him "a stunted pedant," the most opprobrious of all epithets to a man of function like Zeno. He denied *in toto* that the Stagyrite, or Stageright, as he called him, was any way equal to Aristotle, who discovered the immortality of the soul; or that either Melesigenes, or Maro, or the Mantuan swain, or Quintus, or Flaccus could any way compare with Homer, Virgil, Horace, or even Mecænas. As for Pope Alexander, he never heard of but one pope who made verses, and that was Pope Joan. He concluded by saying he thought Mæonides, upon the whole, the first poet of antiquity, though most of the critics preferred Homer.

Mercy on us! how Zeno did fume, and how sincerely and with what fervour Mrs. Judith sympathized with him! True, she had called the profound Zeno a blockhead and pedant a thousand times; but that was altogether a different affair from other people calling him so. For that wife must be more or less than woman

who, when it comes to the pinch, won't take sides with her good man against all the world, though she may fully agree with it in her own private opinion. There is no saying what would have been the result of this holy alliance of the high contracting powers; for before they could agree upon the protocol they were interrupted by the entrance of Leonard Dangerfield, who came to inquire into the state and condition of poor Rainsford.

The room occupied by this unfortunate young gentleman was at the extremity and in the rear of the house, and, though not actually in durance, the door was kept carefully locked, and one of the villagers employed in watching outside during the night. It seemed to have escaped the notice of his friends, or perhaps they did not think it material, that there was a window not five feet from the ground, which, though nailed down, yet was not impassable to a desperate man. The person appointed to mount guard slept as soundly as most watchmen do in some great cities which shall be nameless, and with such a quiet conscience, that nothing less than the last trumpet would have roused him before his time.

Under these circumstances, it does not altogether amount to a miracle that when the door was opened the prisoner was *non est inventus*. On examination, it was found that the nails which fastened the window had been removed by some one of those cunning expedients so common with people in his situation, and that he had escaped in that way; but at what time of the night there were no means of judging,

nor were there the least indications to point out the course he had pursued. All traces of him were lost, and all subsequent inquiries proved fruitless in this remote quarter, where people lived at a distance from each other, and held little communication with the rest of the world. The new-born hope awakened in the bosom of Virginia was thus for ever blighted; and the bow that had for a moment been forced into elasticity became more relaxed than before. It was, indeed, almost a mortal blow; and it is not surprising if, after so many trials, she sank into a state of almost hopeless depression.

But the sun rose and set as usual, the people of the village continued their daily occupations, and the people of the world followed their example. What was it to them if a hair-brained wanderer was let loose upon the surface of that slippery bubble called life, to scramble his way in beggary, and perish haply by the road-side? or that a tender-hearted girl was mourning his fate in the silence of despair? Men must eat and die, and worms must eat them; the world must go on; and, happily for the race of insects that crawl upon it, the sum total of the woes of life amounts to no more than that which falls to the share of each single individual; and that is enough in all conscience.

Zeno continued to fire his paper pellets briskly at the head of his antagonist, who blazed away in turn; and it came to pass at length, that according to the good old way of the world, they were miraculously reconciled by the interposition of a third party in the war of criticism, who most unceremoniously knocked their pates

together, and denounced them as a couple of blockheads, so equally ignorant that none but the great mathematician who subtracted nothing from nothing, and found to his astonishment that nothing remained, could decide between these two incomprehensible nonentities. From that moment they united their forces against the common enemy, and were ever after held together by the cement of a common enmity.

But the condition of Mrs. Judith after the departure of Rainsford, and the total seclusion of Virginia, was most to be deplored; for now she had scarcely a peg on which to hang even a shred of curiosity. Not to speak irreverently of the divinity of woman, she might be likened unto a hound at fault; she tripped about the village this way and that, in all directions, poking her nose here, and there, and everywhere, with a wistful look of inquiry, an anxious, business-like air, exceedingly edifying. It happened, by a miraculous interposition, as cruel as it was unaccountable, that there was not a single secret to be had in all the village. Such a dearth, such a famine was never known within the memory of the oldest gossip; and there is reason to fear that it would have been all over with Mrs. Judith Paddock, had she not most providentially, on the sixth day of her abstinence, detected a stranger riding into the town with an umbrella over his head. What he could want of an umbrella, when it neither rained nor did the sun shine, puzzled her to the quick. But when he stopped at the house of Colonel Dangerfield, which was now renewed in more than its pristine glories, to the great exultation of that pillar of the aristocracy Pom-

pay Ducklegs, she became one of the happiest of women; for she was sure there was a secret in embryo, if not already in being. In addition to this, Leonard Dangerfield departed about this time to take his seat in the Assembly; and next to an arrival in a village is a departure from it. Altogether, Mrs. Judith became quite comfortable; and in this state of salubrity we shall leave her for the present.

The stranger, whose opportune arrival had given such absolute content to Mrs. Judith, was a stout, well-made, ruddy-faced man, it may be about five-and-forty, who wore a pair of fancy cord breeches, a pair of white-top boots, and a gray coat with covered buttons. On the top of his head was his hair, and on the top of his hair his hat, which was a beaver of most respectable dimensions as to brim, if not as to crown. His hair consisted of a profusion of short stiff curls, resembling what the illustrious Manuel, now figuring in the dressing-room of Death, whilom did call "everlasting," baked—yea, by this light, baked!—like a brown loaf in the oven! Whether it was a wig, or whether his own crop, whether a work of nature or of art, we must leave to Mrs. Judith Paddock to ferret out; solemnly pledging ourselves to the curious reader, who doth inordinately dote on these man-milliner matters, that if she ever at any future period penetrates this important affair, we will forthwith apprize him of it by a telegraphic despatch. Altogether, this remarkable stranger, who looked out of his eyes just like other people, had that about him which we call respectable; and if we might judge from

certain marks which constitute national identity, he was a native of what the old bards once called "merry England."

Such as he was, he rode up to the door of Colonel Dangerfield, and was detected by Mrs. Judith in the very act of delivering a letter; the reception of which was immediately followed by his dismounting from his horse, and entering the hospitable door, which, as in poor old Ireland, they say always opens in Kentucky of itself on the arrival of a stranger.

"I'll lay my life," exclaimed Mrs. Judith, clapping her hands, "he brings news of the runaway." But Mrs. Judith was mistaken for once in her life.

He was described in the letter to Colonel Dangerfield as an English country gentleman of easy fortune, who, having three or four months to spare previous to the hunting season, had taken a voyage across the Atlantic to see the Falls of Niagara, and satisfy himself, by a close and minute investigation of the true state of the country, by riding through it as fast as a comet. He was a scholar, a liberal, and a sensible man; but, like all his countrymen, he was ever in a desperate hurry when he travelled. In a stage, he scolded, or bribed the driver to get on; and he was once nearly annihilated by being obliged to travel twenty miles on a canal. In this we profess to sympathize with him most heartily. He had been spoiled by whirling on railroads; and more than once astounded our whips, who thought they were doing wonders, by exclaiming, in all the impatience of incurable languor,—

"Zounds! my good fellow, how slow you travel!"

A steamboat of eight or ten miles an hour was intolerable; and if haply he had got hold of the tail of a comet, he would have bribed the driver to go a *little* faster. Never man was in such a hurry to get to a place except this selfsame gentleman, when he got there, to get away from it. He had made the grand tour in five weeks; and on being questioned by Colonel Dangerfield how he could "make tracks," as Bushfield would say, at such a rate, his reply was perfectly characteristic.

"Why, sir, you must know, I always had a courier in advance to order my meals, so that they were sure to be ready on my arrival, and allowed myself only an hour to eat them. In this way I found it very delightful; for I always had a good dinner, and escaped the horrors of being detained in a French or Italian town."

Yet with this foible, which, we believe, is common to all your islanders, whose insular situation generates a feeling of "circumscription and confine," and instigates a desire of escaping, as it were, Mr. Barham was a man of estimable qualities, of an enlarged mind and liberal spirit.

If ever an American and an Englishman got together in this world, old or new, without talking politics, and disagreeing about them, it was not in our presence. It happened in the course of the evening of the arrival of Mr. Barham, that a neighbour, a tradesman, brought home a pair of shoes, or something of that sort, for one of the family; and was, as usual, asked

in, and treated as every man of good character was sure to be treated by the family of Colonel Dangerfield. He was invited to sit down, to "take something." And after talking about the news, the crops, and the election, quietly took his leave. Mr. Barham felt as if a pig had run against him, and soiled his white-top boots, and could not refrain from shrugging his shoulders a little, as the colonel shook him kindly by the hand and bade good night. Dangerfield saw and comprehended the shrug, and determined to have a bout with the stranger the first opportunity. This is never wanting to two men ready cocked and primed, especially an American and an Englishman. Mr. Barham soon took occasion to utter the word equality, with a certain equivocal sarcastic tone, which is sufficiently expressive to apprehensive ears; and the colonel snapped his rifle directly.

"You don't approve of our system of equality, I perceive, Mr. Barham."

"To be frank, for you know we Englishmen always speak our minds, I do not."

"Why so, sir?"

"Why, because I don't like the intrusive familiarities of the vulgar; nor do I believe any system of government can subsist for a length of time without a decided broad distinction of ranks."

"Why so, sir?"

"Because my own reading, reflection, and experience have satisfied me that equality in any respect, either as to rank or fortune, is an impracticable, ruinous theory, which never can be realized."

"I differ with you, Mr. Barham. As to you reading and reflection, I will say nothing, for my maxim is, to appeal to experience, wherever resort can be had to it. May I ask whence you derive your conviction of the impossibility of a system of equality as far as ranks are concerned?"

"From England, sir, from my own country."

"I don't exactly see how your experience can have any application to England, because she has never tried the system of equality, and can therefore know nothing of its impracticability, or its ruinous effects, if it were practicable."

"Why, sir, don't we every day see the consequences of the mob getting uppermost; destruction of property and lives?"

"That is just because there is no equality among you, and not because there is. It is the sense of inequality, and its attendant wants and mortifications, that produce these violent eruptions of popular discontent. If you choose to call the people of this country all equal, very good. You don't see any mobs in Kentucky, nor anywhere else, except among those who bring with them from abroad those habits, and feelings, and old antipathies generated by the very absence of equality."

"But how is it possible for one man to have a proper respect for another, without some feeling of inferiority on his part? Without this, society must become a perfect bear-garden, and the intercourse between people essentially vulgar and indiscriminate," said Mr. Barham.

"That does not necessarily follow; nay, it

does not follow at all. Surely, Mr. Barham, you cannot believe that courtesy, respect, and a due regard to the claims and feelings of others cannot be maintained without a sense of inferiority on one part, and of superiority on the other. Is there no such sentiment in the human mind as that of veneration for superior virtue, or talents; no kindly feeling of one fellow-being for another, that he should require a man to be called a lord, and to possess privileges of which he is denied a share, before he can properly respect him? If you come to the other sex, is there not beauty, virtue, the natural desire to please, and the universal passion of love to ensure them due tenderness and consideration, without their being called ladies? So far indeed as I am acquainted with the countries where these distinctions of ranks prevail, that respect which the sacred institution of marriage requires from man to woman, and from woman to man, is not the most striking feature in the character of the higher ranks."

"But really now, Colonel Dangerfield, you have travelled, and seen the world; do you think it possible to introduce equality into England, without overturning every thing venerable and sacred there?"

"I don't know exactly what you mean, Mr. Barham, by every thing venerable and sacred. If you mean abuses that have grown sacred by long proscription; follies consecrated by time, and institutions that have become venerable, like ruined edifices, because they no longer answer the end of their creation; if you refer to these, I don't believe that they can or will sur-

vive the adoption of a single feature in the system of equality. I admit the difficulty and danger of abolishing the distinction of ranks in countries where it has long prevailed; where every step and stage in life is graduated by the ladder of precedence; and where the people, from education and long habit, have lost all other criterion of respect or reverence, but that of mere rank and title. Here, however, in this country it is quite different; habit and education have prepared them to estimate other claims; and though they may still retain some vestiges of the ancient delusion in respect to these things, there is nothing on the face of the earth which they would so soon resist as a person who should come and demand as a right any privilege or precedence, merely on the score of his title."

"Very well, very well, sir, but you will yet live to see the futility of these notions, that all men are equally wise, equally virtuous, equally brave; and that therefore they must of necessity be made equally rich, equally honourable, and equal in all respects to their rulers."

"Why do you not add, equally tall, equally fat, equally strong, and equally active?" asked the colonel, smiling at this absurd view of equality, which is either ignorantly or wilfully made to represent the rational system of this country. "My dear sir, our policy is not founded on the complete overthrow, but the establishment of the system of Providence, which hath ordained that there shall ever subsist a difference in the activity and capacity of mankind, as well as in the opportunity, and the re-

sults of their exercise. Everybody knows that it is impossible to regulate the consequences of all these, and that one will be wiser, richer, and happier than another, in spite of all laws to make them equal; and in defiance of all efforts to regulate their course of action. Such is not our absurd system of equality, which consists simply in an equality of social and civil rights, granted and guarantied by the laws, over which we ourselves have a control, each in his primitive character of a citizen, a portion of the government. There is not here, as in many, I may say in all parts of the Old World, one law for the king, another for the noble; one law for the noble, another for the commoner; one law for the freeholder, another for the copyholder; one law for the bishop, another for his curate. No, sir; all the people are peers to each other; peers of the Republic; and you might as well assert that because every member of your House of Lords is the peer of the others, that, therefore, they must all be equally wise, rich, and noble; that there can be no distinction between them; that the idiot lawgiver must be held everywhere, and at all times equal to the wisest; the poorest as rich as the Marquis of Stafford; and that among the nobles of England nothing but beastly familiarity and rank vulgarism can possibly prevail in their intercourse with each other."

Mr. Barham discovered some little impatience at this long harangue. He himself spoke very quick, like a majority of his countrymen of the same class; while the colonel, like most Americans, delivered himself with great deliberation.

The worthy Englishman had never been at Washington to learn patience by attending the debates in Congress; he yawned more than once before he replied,—

"Well, you have made out a pretty strong case. I think I could match it with a stronger if there were time. You will excuse me, Colonel Dangerfield, if I ask permission to retire; but I cannot, I fear, excuse myself to this lady for being accessory to keeping her listening so long. Good night. I must be up betimes in the morning, and will take my leave now; for I have arranged to meet the steamboat at New Madrid. I must be in New Orleans in a week, at New York in a fortnight after, and in England a month after that, or I shall lose my chance of killing the first pheasant in the good county of Kent. So good night, good night, and thanks for your lecture and your hospitality."

Thus they parted, and thus endeth the chapter of equality. We feel, however, bound in honour to apprize the curious reader that Mrs. Judith Paddock never discovered whether the curls of the stranger were natural or "everlasting," and he must be content to remain in condign ignorance for the time to come. For we grieve to say, it appears by the latest accounts that Mr. Barham not long since lost his breath on the Manchester railroad in an attempt to travel at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and never recovered it again.

CHAPTER XII.

The best man of the village, and other matters

NOTHING worthy of being handed down to posterity occurred in the village of Dangerfieldville until the expiration of some three weeks, when Master Zeno Paddock received a packet franked by the honourable Leonard Dangerfield, and containing a printed copy of his maiden speech in the House of Assembly. In the United States, and more especially in the west, making a speech is considered equivalent to gaining a great victory by sea or land. It constitutes an era in the life of a young man, and with great reason; for in a free community, where there are no standing armies of any kind, either soldiers or police, sufficient to enforce obedience, the power of persuasion is the supreme power, and he who best wields it the true monarch. The next day the Western Sun rose in all its glory; it contained an account of the great debate on the subject of the small ward collector's malversations, which not only involved many important constitutional principles, but incidentally affected the liberties of the people, and not only the people, but all their posterity.

On this great question, according to the Western Sun, "the honourable Mr. Stapvital spoke four hours, with an eloquence never surpassed

in this or any other age; the honourable Mr. Flamgudgeon followed on the other side, in a speech of six hours, replete with argument and profound investigation; he was answered by the honourable Mr. Doddipol, who was on his legs (or, as Zeno unfortunately had it, *knees*) upwards of eight hours, and electrified the house by a display of oratory which Cicero might have envied, and Tully strove in vain to equal. The honourable Mr. Flapdowdle took the floor on the other side; and in a speech of three days presented a bird's eye view of the state of Europe, from the decline and fall of the Roman empire to the decline and fall of Napoleon. This occupied the first day. On the second he talked about railroads, canals, internal (or, as Zeno had it, *infernal*) improvements, the public lands, state rights, and the tariff; and on the third he discussed the subject of matters and things in general. It was a most powerful effort of eloquence. The speaker was observed several times to hang down his head, as if overpowered by the weight of argument; several of the members nodded assent on various occasions; and many serious accidents happened to the little children, whose mothers and nurses were so fascinated by Mr. Flapdowdle's eloquence, that they forgot to go home and take care of their domestic affairs. But when the honourable Mr. Dangerfield arose, you might hear the grass grow in the fields, there was such a deathlike silence. He commenced by a solemn exordium," &c. &c. Here followed the speech, which, indeed, was one that did the young man great honour, and was only ren-

dered almost ridiculous by the absurd praises of Master Zeno Paddock, who manufactured a whole column of fustian on the occasion.

On the adjournment of the legislature, which happened immediately after the great debate concerning the delinquency of the small ward collector, Leonard Dangerfield returned home, where he was received with affectionate pride by his family, and with enthusiasm by the people of the village, who decreed him the ovation of a barbecue. The young man was struck with the change which a few weeks had made in the looks of his sister, and, above all, in her deportment and temper. She was deadly pale, and the charming roundness of her figure, which had been fostered by the pure springs and pure air of the Kentucky uplands, had given place to a meager form, all lassitude and weakness. The alteration had not struck the parents, who saw her every day; but when Leonard pointed it out to them, their fears were greatly excited. A consultation was held, which ended in a plan for a little family tour and voyage on the Mississippi, which, it was hoped, might give a new direction to her feelings, by the change and variety of objects it would offer to her contemplation. Virginia gave a listless assent, and the thing was presently arranged. The great Pompey, who grew grayer and younger every day, and the little Pompey, now a greater man than his ancestor, were to accompany them. But Mr. Littlejohn, after divers expressive yawns, decided, that as they would want an active person to look round and take

care of matters and things about the place, he would stay at home.

It was now the early autumn, when our travellers set forth on horseback to strike some point of the Mississippi, whence they might embark in one of the steamboats which now began to ply regularly between St. Louis and New Orleans. Their object in this land journey was to give Virginia the benefit of the exercise it afforded. In the short period that had intervened since Colonel Dangerfield sought the wilderness,—such are the rapid changes which the genius of freedom, the parent of courage, energy, and generous enterprise, produces in these regions—roads had been made in various directions, and little towns, destined in the imagination of the founders one day to become the mart of half the New World, had risen, or at least had been "laid out," as the phrase is, wherever a favourable situation presented itself. Yet still, occasional parts of the ride were through primeval forests, the growth of the virgin earth, whose unexhausted energies produced all the wonders of spontaneous vegetation. If it should peradventure ever happen to our book to be read by persons unacquainted with the energies which seem to be here communicated from the soil to its lords, they will doubtless marvel at the phenomenon of a young and delicate girl and an elderly matron thus travelling after the manner of the lady-errants of yore, on ambling palfrey, through unpeopled solitudes. But we assure them nothing is, or was a few years ago, more common; and we ourselves were once acquainted with a little fair-haired, blue-eyed western

damsel that looked as delicate as a snowdrop, who used to accompany her father, a senator of the United States, to the seat of government, and return with him (a distance of more than seven hundred miles), on horseback.

In due time our travellers reached a little town on the banks of the Mississippi—that mighty river, with a name almost as long as its interminable course—just in the nick of time to get on board a steamboat on her way upwards. As the vessel steered out from the shore into the rash and boiling stream, whose force appeared as if it might baffle all the powers physical and intellectual of that sturdy little emmet yclept man, it was sublime to see how at first she trembled on being struck by the current, and stood still, as if to collect her energies for the great encounter of all that was consummate in art with all that was tremendous in nature. At first, it seemed doubtful which would gain the victory, until, by degrees, the boat began to ascend faster and faster, and dashed forward with a triumphant vigour, which seemed to proclaim that the power of art was irresistible. No one, indeed, can behold the change which these vessels are now silently bringing about in the great region of the west, and resist the conclusion that the genius of Fulton, whom the ungenerous rivalry of England has sought to rob of the glory of having consummated this noble invention, has laid the foundation of greater and more rapid changes in the New World than the genius of Napoleon did in the Old.

The novelty of this mode of conveyance, and the beauty of the scenery, which, after passing

some distance up the river, opened before them, gradually awakened Virginia from that feeling of lassitude and hopeless indifference which had by degrees usurped the dominion of her once active, energetic mind. The long rich "bottom" called *Bois Brulé*, which by the learned Thebans of the broad-horns has been done into English under the name of "Bob Ruly;" the Cornice Rock, forming a regular massive wall of perpendicular strata, and exhibiting all the appearance of a long castellated rampart; the High Tower, rearing itself out of the bosom of the swift current in lonely grandeur; the far-famed "Sycamore-root," that spot infamous in the logbooks of Mississippi navigators for the wreck of many a stately broad-horn; the darting of the boat across the river, from the swift adverse current to the favourable eddy; the manœuvring to avoid the snags and sawyers, names of dangerous import; and a thousand other novelties, all rapidly succeeding each other, restored a temporary spring and cheerfulness of heart, to which for some time she had been a stranger.

When tired of the river, they went ashore at the little towns on its banks, and stopped for another boat, until finally they reached St. Louis, which, standing near the point of junction of two of the greatest rivers of the earth, aspires with the claim of legitimacy to a future eminence, of which the people seem to think they can form no sufficient idea. Here all that was old was French, and all that was new American. It is the land of saints; St. Charles, St. Louis, St. Genevieve, St. Francis, and many

more; and the crosses of the churches mark the abodes of the ancient faith. The residence of the Frenchman was more picturesque in the distance; its mud walls, neatly whitewashed, appeared beautiful in the midst of rich meadows, or on the borders of prairies adorned with harvests of flowers, casting forth the perfumes of a hundred Arabies. The Yankee, on the contrary, follows his own fashion; and as it seems the destiny of that revolutionary race to change every thing wheresoever they go, our travellers could easily detect the commencement of the wonders they achieve in their incessant wanderings.

It is curious to reflect on the odd confusion of names to be found in this and every other portion of the United States. The early settlers seem to have put in requisition the four quarters of the world. St. Francis and Perry, St. Charles and Monroe, St. Louis and Madison, St. Genevieve and Jefferson, Hannibal and Potosi, Belle Fontaine and Herculaneum, New Madrid and Tywapatia, Palmyra and Bluffton, Caledonia and Kaskaskias, Tiber and Waconda, Pinkney and Grenville, Columbia and Cote sans Dessein, not forgetting the Big Black Fork of Little White River, and a thousand more, all form a portion of the body politic of the state of Missouri, and all lie peaceably together side by side. Some owe their existence here to the attachments of men who came from far distant countries; some to religious feelings; some to classical recollections; some to a patriotic attachment to distinguished names; some to vanity; and some to caprice. The whole com-

bination marks the association of people coming from distant regions of the earth, and here perpetuating, as far as possible, the country of their fathers or the place of their nativity. The names of a few of the great rivers may, perhaps, serve to keep alive the recollection of the first lords of the soil long after every other memorial has passed away

One of the most novel as well as enchanting scenes in nature is the prairie, or delta, extending to a distance of many miles between the two great rivers. It is for a considerable portion of the year one sea of flowers, one wide region of fragrance; and its features differ from those of any other lands in any other country. Not a tree is to be seen except upon its outer edge, and the blue horizon meets it everywhere, forming a long straight line, without the least appearance of irregularity or undulation. As you cast your eye over it, it is all one series of deceptions. Sometimes, owing to a particular state of the atmosphere, or the position of the sun, distances and objects are increased or diminished like the vagaries of the phantasmagoria; things that are near will appear as if at a great distance, and those at a distance at other times seem as if you could almost touch them. Now a bird will seem as if touching the sky with its head, and anon the herds appear like an assemblage of insects. One day it was proposed to Virginia to make an excursion to St. Charles, and visit at the same time the Mamelles, as the French have aptly called them,—a succession of fine regular bluffs of great height, and commanding a full view of the beautiful

scenery in the vicinity, after which they were to return to a little old picturesque French village, there to sojourn awhile if they should find comfortable accommodations. They passed a delightful morning in rambling among the endless variety of flowers, or on the summits of the Mamelles, whence they could distinguish the two vast streams which here unite in a spot worthy of them both. Nothing could be more beautiful to the eye, nothing more ennobling to the imagination, which carried them to the distance of thousands of miles, to the remote and almost unknown, unvisited regions whence they receive their first tribute from some nameless spring in some nameless mountain recess or hidden forest. After banqueting on the scene till almost satiated with its redundant beauties, they rode over to the French village, where they found tolerable accommodations at the house of a little old Frenchman, like all his gallant nation, good-humoured, polite, and devoted to the ladies.

But he did not like the Yankees, by which term he designated the Americans in general. They had begun terrible inroads upon the old customs of the village, and to make the dust of antiquity, which had been quietly gathering there for two centuries, fly at a great rate. "They are commencing their pestilential improvements," said he, "and one has nothing to do now but to work all day to be only as comfortable as we used to be without working at all. When I first came here, one had only to apply to the governor, and he gave him as much land as he could cultivate, without slaving him-

self to death, for the price of a small fee to his secretary. Now Congress makes everybody pay for it, and in a little while the Yankees make it worth so much that it is enough to ruin a man to buy it. In fact, they increase the price of every thing, and I myself have been obliged to descend to the honour of entertaining the ladies at my house, in order to keep up with the march of improvement, as they call it. Diable, monsieur! the Yankees are so busy, they have no time to go to church except on Sunday, and instead of hearing the bells ring so charmingly from morning to night, as they used to do here when the people had nothing to do but pray and dance, parbleu! these heretics eat fish, I believe, every day when they can get them, except in Lent. Ah! monsieur, the old French regime—the old Spanish regime much more charming. Ah! so easy, so—what you call?—ah! yes, so lazy as the Yankees say. No gentleman, no noblesse, no aristocracy now. Eh bien! never mind — can't be helped. Malbrook son—" and he skipped off, humming the old French air with right good will.

Having performed his vocation, whatever it was, he returned, just as a tall, raw-boned, athletic fellow was standing opposite the window of the hotel, pronouncing himself to be half horse, half alligator, and a little of the snapping-turtle; and affirming, with a few original oaths peculiar to this latitude, that he could whip his weight in wild cats, there being no back out in him or any of his breed. He was all the way from Roaring River, and had once rode through a crab-apple orchard on a flash of

lightning, besides performing several other remarkable feats too tedious to mention.

"Pray, monsieur, who is that valiant person?" asked Colonel Dangerfield.

"Ah! that is the best man in the village. Diable! under the French and Spanish regime, the good priest was the best man; now this half horse, half alligator is the best. Voilà, monsieur! he goes about, he challenges everybody, he whips everybody, and then, diable! he calls himself the best man in the village! Hey, begar! this is one way of being good, I think. 'Tis what they call one Yankee notion, I suppose."

The best man in the village was, in fact, a sort of George-a-Green, a Pinder of Wakefield, the champion of the community, the glass of fashion, the director of public opinion among his fellow-boatmen, and a sort of privileged outlaw who played all sorts of pranks with a prescriptive impunity originating in that involuntary respect which is everywhere paid among the common people to strength and courage combined. Yet he was not ill-natured nor blood-thirsty, but was actuated by a false taste rather than a bad heart. Such men mark the existence of a state of society in which the physical and pugnacious qualities predominate over the intellectual; and their disappearance, like that of the buffalo and beaver, is a sure sign that civilization is at hand. In the van of life, where every step and every station is beset with dangers from the wild beast and the wild man, courage is the quality of all others most in request; and it is not to be wondered

at if the disposition to do battle should become chronic, and subsist long after the necessity has ceased. The best man of the village would have been a treasure surrounded by dangers; he was little better than a nuisance in a civilized community.

CHAPTER XIII.

A philosopher in rags.

THE little village in which our travellers sojourned, was one of those old establishments which seem destined never to grow any larger. It was inhabited by a mild, amiable race—the descendants of the early French emigrants, of whose character it is sufficient to say that they were the only people that ever gained the affections and confidence of the wild aboriginal race of North America. It was a primitive Catholic settlement; and whether it is owing to the number of saints' days and holydays in this ancient and venerable code, or from any other cause, we have heard it observed, that in the old countries the people of this persuasion are, in general, not so active and industrious as those of many others. Perhaps the vast number of charitable institutions connected with this church in almost every country, and the custom of distributing alms, or food, on particular days, to all comers, by relieving the poor from the necessity of exertion, may contribute not a little to the effect which we have noticed. There was a little church, the bell of which seemed never quiet, and the only busy man in the village was the bell-ringer. Other than this, there was little or nothing to disturb the repose of the good people,

who had long lived, and might have long lived in contented simplicity, had not the transfer of the vast region of Louisiana, the only empire ever acquired without the expense of a drop of blood, paved the way for the intrusion of those "cochon Yankees," as the old French landlord called them in his sleeve, who straightway began, as usual, to turn every thing upside down. By their pestilent activity they rendered it absolutely necessary that everybody should be as stirring as themselves, in order to keep pace with the progress of the new comers; for though an indolent community may do very well by itself, the moment it comes in contact or in rivalry with one that is active and industrious, it must go the way of all flesh, or accommodate itself to the circumstances of the times, and exert all its energies to prevent falling far in the rear of the rest of the world.

"Ah! monsieur," said the landlord, an old remnant of the ancient régime: "Ah! monsieur, the Yankee are one great people, but then she always so busy, busy, busy, morning, noon, and night. Diable! she don't give himselves time to say their prayers, I think. She come here among us, and she must ave new road: very well, the road is make at last. Eh bien! then she must ave a canal right long side of him, and everybody must give money for him. Very good, then we shall ave new streets, a new court-house, a new market, and a new church. So she come round for more money for that. Then she goes on, busy, busy, busy, never satisfied, more work, more money, and all for the dem publique good. Diable! I

wonder what the publique ever do for me that I shall work for him if he was the king himself? Well, monsieur, we ave got new road, new canal, new court-house, new market, and new church; and now I say to myself, ha, hah! I think she must ave satisfaccion at last. Phew! no such thing; she must ave town meeting to choose the police; then she must ave town meeting to choose the legislator; then she must ave town meeting to send the president and his bureau all to le diable, for something I don't know. Eh bien! all this done, I say ha hah! I shall dance and sing now a leetle. Phew! Morbleu, no such thing. Next time all this to do over again. The government machine out of order, she say, and must set it right again. So we go, year after year, making the grande improvement, and mending the government; and we Frenchmen, bongre, malgre, must do every thing de haute lutte, when we had much rather do nothing at all. Peste! that I shall be condemned to live in one dem country, always in want of improvement, under a government that always want mending. What you call? Ah! the dem self-government more trouble than she is worth, I think. For my part, monsieur, I like somebody shall take it off my hands, and let me dance a leetle some time. Voilá! yonder comes one great politician, one grand tariff man, as she call himself."

Such was the harangue of mine host to Leonard Dangerfield, as they sat on the little piazza of the hotel in social chit-chat during the absence of the rest of the family, who had taken a walk to see the ancient church, which

was now open, and the bell ringing, as usual, most musically melancholy. The interruption was occasioned by the approach of one of those wandering vagabonds not unfrequently seen haunting the precincts of village taverns. He came up, and planting his stick on the ground, crossed his arms in rest, and remained looking at them in silence, as if waiting to be noticed. At first Leonard took him for one of those pestilent outlaws who, having wasted their substance at the tavern, ever afterwards assume the privilege of hanging about the doors, and abusing the landlord for not trusting them, now that their money is all spent. If wars answer any good purpose, it is doubtless in ridding the country of these worthless excrescences, who seldom fail to get swept off by recruiting parties in their progress through the villages. They hardly ever return, being excellent food for powder; and if spared by arms, generally fall victims to their former vices in the end.

His dress displayed innumerable incongruities, being composed, or rather decomposed, of the remnants of many fragments of finery, preposterously disposed about his person. His coat had been once military, the rusty buttons bearing the vestiges of our national symbols, the soaring eagle and the thirteen stars; his waistcoat was of embroidered satin, with old-fashioned flaps, such as might have once appertained to a player; his trousers of home-spun tow linen, and his shoes, but of these little remained, for his wanderings had left his feet almost bare. On his head he wore an old cocked hat, ornamented by a wreath of ever-

greens and faded flowers, and something like a star of tin was fastened on the breast of his coat. The landlord accounted for his military costume by the circumstance of his having exchanged his former clothes with a worthless discharged soldier, who had cheated him. The features of the peripatetic, though haggard, squalid, dirty, and almost hidden by an enormous bushy beard, still wore the remains of an aspect of some interest; and his black eyes, though sunk deep in his head, sparkled with a restless animation, indicating an active or a troubled mind.

The worthy host affected to take no notice of the intruder, and continued to discuss the various subjects of war, commerce, agriculture, manufactures, matters which every man within the limits of these United States understands, at least as well as the mother that bore him. They were, however, interrupted from time to time by the man of rags, who, without raising his chin from his crossed arms, or his arms from his stick, now and then made a strange random observation, as he seemed to catch and comprehend a portion of the conversation between Leonard and mine host. Thus, on hearing the words domestic manufactures, he chuckled forth an odd dry laugh, and pointing to his trousers, exclaimed, in a hoarse hollow voice, which indicated that he was labouring under a severe cold,—

"Look! I am a great advocate for domestic manufactures; a black spider spun and wove these; they were stitched with the needle of a compass that pointed nine ways from Sunday.

Don't you see every stitch squints a different way?"

Just then a mosquito settled on his hand, which he caught, and squeezing the blood out of his body—

"Good! mosquitoes are your true insect soldiers; they live by blood. Huzza! boys, I shall conquer the whole nation one of these odd-come-shorts, and make every gallinipper a field-marshal."

Then, approaching nearer, he asked the landlord, "if he could tell him the reason why cats washed their hands with their tongues, and ran after their tails." On his replying in the negative, the ragged Theban exclaimed most contemptuously—

"Tut! then go and twist your gray beard into a rope, and hang yourself on a sugar-cane, as I mean to do as soon as mine grows long enough. You see I am nursing it, daddy. I sleep all night in the fields with my face up to the moon; they say it turns fish rotten, and men's brains upside down; but I don't believe a word of it, or I should have been mad long ago, instead of being a philosopher. But what was I saying? O! I sleep with my face turned up to the moon: they say it's made of green cheese, but I doubt that, for it would have been about my ears long ago in a shower of skippers. You'd be surprised at the queer things I see up in the stars there, sometimes, when every one is asleep; some think they govern men, but for my part I go by the moon when it shines, and when it goes down I strike fire with two Irish potatoes, and study philosophy till my eyes turn

into dark lanterns, and will-of-the-wisp leads me into the mire. He was a blind dancing-master once."

"Don't pester the gentleman witn your nonsense, but go about your business; go to sleep, that is the best thing you can do."

"Sleep! Landlord, did you ever see a goose stand sentry on one leg, to keep itself awake? that is your true reason: a philosopher must have a reason for every thing. Do you know why a goose always stands on her left, and a gander on his right leg?"

"Diable! not I," answered mine host, petulantly.

"Then how dare you talk to a philosopher, most ignorant publican, and justly classed with sinners? I saw *your* fate in Mercury last night; you'll be hanged for feloniously robbing a cask of your own whiskey, and filling it up with water."

"I believe you've got too much whiskey in your head; you are in love with whiskey I'm afraid," said the other.

"Love! What do such pieces of old worm-eaten parchment as you know of love? I was in love once myself before I turned astronomer, and was bubbled by the moon out of the sixpenny worth of wits my father left me for an inheritance." He put his hand to his forehead, as if to recall something.

"I have it. I remember it was the year behind the flood, before the grass grew, or swallows built their nests in young men's whiskers, or cows fed in the churchyards, or sextons laughed in their sleeves when other people

were crying. I forget her name—I forget her name, though it used to be music to me. But it's no great matter now; for if we had married, I should certainly have killed her with kindness, and then I should have howled for it. They said I should marry her when I lost my wits; but I valued them too highly, and stuck to them like death to an old negro. But, would you think it? she fell in love with a wig-block in a barber's window, and left me, because, as I afterwards heard, the story went I lost my wits in searching out a way to be married without losing my soul for it. But here is the whole story in black and white. I wrote it one night in the churchyard. Read it, read it; it will make you laugh ready to split your sides. You can give it me again in the churchyard, where I walk every clear night, and study the lying epitaphs. It makes me laugh—ha, ha, ha! it makes me laugh to think how easy it is to be a good man on a tombstone!" Saying this, he handed an old soiled paper to Leonard, who had been musing in painful perplexity at his disjointed chat, and went away as merry as madness could make him.

As Leonard Dangerfield listened to the wanderings of the poor itinerant, and scanned more attentively his appearance and manner, he felt a vague, dreamy sort of impression that somewhere, and at some time or other, he had seen him before. He fancied he could perceive something about him indicating that he was one who had seen better days. It is difficult to define what it was, but, in the language of romance, it was that mysterious something of

which neither rags, poverty, nor desolation of heart can strip a being whose mind has once been embellished with the graces of intellectual refinement. He held the paper in his hand while he questioned the landlord, who informed him that the poor creature had first made his appearance in the village about a fortnight before, pretty much in the state he was now. He seemed perfectly harmless, and found little difficulty in obtaining of the charitable a sufficiency to supply the necessities of hunger. He had either forgotten his name, or designedly kept it a secret; for he would not disclose either that or the place whence he came. He never accepted of a bed for the night; but when the weather was fair slept, as he said, at the sign of the moon and seven stars; and when it was foul, he would not tell where. As the landlord finished these details, Dangerfield accidentally turned his eye on the paper which he had continued to hold in his hand. He started, and uttered an exclamation of painful surprise; for it was an old letter in his own handwriting, directed to Dudley Rainsford, and which he had written him on receiving the information of his having saved the life of Virginia.

"Good God!" exclaimed he; "can it be possible that I should not have known him!"

"Known whom?" asked the landlord, inquisitively.

The question brought him to his recollection, and mine host being called away, he was left a few moments alone to consider of the course to be pursued in this delicate emergency. The

result was a determination to keep the matter a secret from Virginia, while he sought an interview with the wandering beggar, whom he contemplated placing in some asylum where he would be kindly treated, and where his sister might never have an opportunity of having her feelings harrowed up by witnessing his miserable plight. He had scarcely settled this in his mind when the party returned. Virginia seemed in better spirits than she had been for a long time; she described the incidents of their walk, the church, the altar, the pious pictures painted by artists more remarkable for their orthodoxy than their skill, and the various little peculiarities that so strikingly mark the difference between the forms of the Catholic and those of the religion in which she had been brought up, with a degree of spirit and vivacity which caused her parents to exchange glances of encouraging sympathy. But the anxiety of Leonard prevented his partaking in these newly-awakened hopes; for he felt a presentiment that there was in store for the poor girl a trial more severe than any she had yet endured. Virginia noticed this, and rallied him, but ineffectually. He took the earliest opportunity to walk out in search of the wandering mendicant. But he was nowhere to be found, and he returned with a determination to urge their departure early in the morning. His plan was to forget his pocket-book, or something of value, that might furnish a pretext for his returning immediately and resuming his search for Rainsford, which he resolved to prosecute until all hope of discovery was lost.

CHAPTER XIV.

A criticism on epitaphs.

THOUGH it was now hazy autumn, yet the air in this mild climate was quite genial at times, and the calm silence of the night in this orderly little village invited to contemplation as well as repose. The chamber of Virginia looked into the churchyard of the little ancient edifice, where reposed the ashes of the generations that had passed away. The region of the narrow house was marked by those expressive little hillocks whose ominous size and shape give token of the uses to which they are appropriated. Nature, as if abhorring the very idea of extinction, seldom, if ever, forms any thing like a grave; and go where we will, in the churchyard, the forest, or the field, we can tell almost instinctively the spot where repose the last remnants of mortality from all others. Most of the graves were marked by a white cross, the emblem of an ancient and respectable faith; and a few distinguished by tombstones of snowy marble, standing like sheeted ghosts of dignity and distinction amid the lowly plebeian race around them, affording significant indications that pride as well as hope looks beyond the grave. The little gray church, unspoiled by paint, had an air of dignity derived from its antique form and simple plain-

ness, which well harmonized with the pious ends to which it had been so long consecrated. It called not up ideas of pride, or wealth, or arrogance, but of primitive simplicity, dignified poverty, and lowly humility, which better, far better than all the vulgar trappings of decoration, all the titles of ecclesiastical aristocracy, accord with the vocation of those whose highest, most endearing title is that of a shepherd, whose most dignified employment that of tending their flocks.

The night had been some time on the track of morning as Virginia sat contemplating the scene before her, and occasionally soaring into the regions of the past or the future, as memory or imagination took the reins. The waning moon, "like sky-hung Indian bow," was fast sinking towards the western horizon, and the long shadows began to be more and more indistinct. Beyond the church she had a full view of the river, across which a single line of light threw its long narrow radiance, looking like a silver bridge athwart some fabled tide, for the nymphs and river-gods to enact their nightly sports, or bask in the rays of the regent of the starry empire.

Presently her attention was attracted by the appearance of a figure bounding from the little porch of the church, and bending its steps among the quiet people; now stopping as if to read the inscriptions; now hurrying from one to another, and anon throwing itself full length on a grave. The moon now sank behind the Mamelles, and in the starry light she could not distinguish whether it was man or woman;

but that it was something human she was sure, for the indistinct murmurings of a human voice fell faintly on her ear at intervals. After remaining quiet on the bed of death, it started up on a sudden, and seemed to be employed in digging with its hands. Virginia was happily ignorant of the refinements of a highly-cultivated state of society, one of the indications of which is the existence of a race of wretches who violate the sanctity of the tomb, and bring about an untimely resurrection of those sacred remains which savages revere, and none but Christians violate. Yet still she shuddered with a vague horror at the midnight occupation of the figure, which, after continuing awhile apparently scratching up the earth, all of a sudden ceased, on hearing the faint sound of oars proceeding from a boat coming down the river, and sought concealment in the place from whence it had emerged. Curiosity retained her at the window some time longer, but, seeing it did not return, she sought her pillow; and it was not till the first crowing of the cock that the gentle visitant of night poured the blessing of oblivion on her pillow.

She arose in the morning pale and languid, and answered the inquiries of her friends by relating what she had seen during the night. Various were the conjectures of the parents, but Leonard said nothing. He had his suspicions, but wisely kept them to himself, as every discreet man should. The honest landlord, however, soon set them all to rights. It was a ghost, which had appeared at about the same

hour for ten or twelve nights in succession, to the great consternation of the village.

"But Father Jacques will be here to-morrow," said he, "and soon settle his business."

"Why don't you set a watch, and find out who or what it is?" asked Colonel Dangerfield.

"Why, monsieur, we did; but somehow or other, just before the time it generally comes they all got so sleepy they couldn't keep their eyes open; and as they couldn't well watch with them shut, you know, monsieur, they thought they might as well go home and sleep quietly in their beds."

"A very judicious decision, certainly. But didn't the Yankee curiosity induce some of them to see it out?"

"O no, monsieur; the Yankees don't believe in any thing, I think. They doubt the divine right of the king and the infallibility of the pope. Diable! I was wrong; they do believe in roads, canals, and the blessings of liberty."

The appearance of the ghost made Leonard Dangerfield more anxious than ever to leave the village, and he pressed it with such earnestness, that Virginia could not help asking,—

"Why, Leonard, what has come over you? I never saw you in a fidget before. I do believe you are frightened at the prospect of a visit from the ghost."

"Perhaps I am," said he, with a sad sort of smile.

"Well, for my part, I have not seen a place since we left home I like so well as this little, odd, old-fashioned village; it is so quiet and so idle, that I feel infected with a delightful incli-

nation to stay here and do nothing all the rest of my life."

But Leonard urged their departure so strenuously, and gave so many good reasons that were good for nothing, that it was at length settled to leave the village immediately after breakfast. Accordingly, after receiving the compliments of mine host, who declared to Mrs. Dangerfield he was much puzzled to tell the mother from the daughter; and to Virginia, laying his hand on his heart, that he was in despair at her going; they set out on their return to St. Louis. Immediately on their arrival, Leonard discovered the loss of his pocket-book, and declared the necessity of returning to look for it. Virginia laughed, which she had seldom done of late.

"Well, I declare I'm almost glad of it. Never let me hear you again scold me for dropping a handkerchief, or tell me to my face that one quarter of my life has been spent in looking for lost keys. If you do, I shall certainly quote the incident of the pocket-book. Shall I lend you some money to pay your expenses? Poor man!"

"Some young men would be willing to lose their pocket-books for such a smile as that," said Leonard, gayly.

This speech turned the current of her thoughts into their accustomed channel, and checked her vivacity in a moment. She thought of who it was that once valued her smiles, and soon became lost in a labyrinth of doubts and anxieties as to what had become of him. The stream that has been diverted from its course by arti-

ficial means returns with accelerated force to its wonted channel, carrying all before it, and deepening its bed.

Leonard Dangerfield lost no time in returning to the village, where he found his pocket-book without difficulty, but did not find poor Rainsford, who, except when compelled by hunger, never appeared; for it seemed he had some secret haunt which no one had discovered, or indeed thought worth seeking. His hopes now rested on the night, and he stationed himself at a window which commanded a view of the churchyard, with a resolution to watch as long as he could keep himself awake. It was after midnight, and the silence of death reigned in the village, when he saw something moving about among the tombstones and graves with little white crosses. Determined at once to satisfy his doubts as to the nature of this mystery, he sallied forth and cautiously entered the churchyard, where, shrouded among the high grass he at length discovered the object of his search, lying with his face upwards, as he had described himself in his interview with the landlord.

"Rainsford! Rainsford!" said Leonard, in a gentle tone.

"Whose ghost are you?" exclaimed he, bounding on his feet; "if you're a lawyer, here's your fee; if a doctor, you must demand it of the good folks hereabouts. You'll find all your patients here."

"Don't talk so madly, Rainsford; you know who I am well enough."

"Yes, I know you; you're the preacher that

gave me such a knock on the head with his Bible that I had nothing but texts in it for a month. But you needn't come here, for these people never subscribe to build churches, or print tracts. Let the old worm-eaten trunks alone, can't you."

"Come with me, Rainsford, come into the house and they will give you a comfortable bed, come."

"Pooh! don't you see I am digging my grave? when I've done it I shall come and bury myself slyly, for fear of the doctors. You must know, old black coat, this is consecrated ground, and your true orthodox worm won't eat a heretic. So I shall be safe enough, like a mole, if I only once get under ground."

"Rainsford, dear Rainsford! come with me."

"How often must I tell you my name is not Rainsford? that is the name of a race that all ran mad. Now I, sir, Mr. Snortgrace I mean, I am as much in my senses as the man in the moon himself. Come, come, sit down here, and we'll have a talk; a little piece of secret biography, for there's nobody to blab here."

He drew Leonard towards a grave, who, being determined to humour him, sat down by his side.

"Yes, here, here—no, here on this grave—there's one below that broke his mother's heart, and yet he escaped hanging, and got an excellent epitaph. I wonder if the worms have any stomach for such rascals. Just here is another pretty boy that was hanged for murder, yet they gave him a public funeral, and made a saint of him afterwards. And here's a pre-

cious fellow, who went about begging money for a poor widow, and then pocketed the whole on pretence that her dead husband owed him money. Yet he got a funeral sermon, and was buried with the honours of war."

Leonard again urged him to go into the house, for the morning air was becoming raw and cold, and the white fogs were rising lazily from the river, with fever and agues on their wings.

"What!" cried he, "are you afraid of your precious bones? My bones are of steel, and my heart is flint, and so when I feel cold I've nothing to do but strike fire with them and warm myself. Don't you think that an economical way of making fire, old Snortgrace? I'll not stir a peg; go to bed yourself, if you had rather sleep than talk reason. If you'd only stay I'd tell you why one star is bigger than another. I am in jolly company, and see how gloriously my drawing-room is lighted. No wonder your ghosts of any taste love to walk by moonlight."

Just then a cloud darkened the low waning moon.

"Ay, ay, my lady! you may well hide your face. I'll swear there is something villanous going on in the world just now; and you turn your back, like a watchman, that you may pretend not to see it. Some plunderer is abroad; adultery and seduction is going on somewhere; or else—yes, that must be it; some murderer is lifting his knife to send some one to kingdom-come before his time. I'll tell you what, Snortgrace, if there is any part of

the day that is irretrievably d—d, it must be from midnight to daylight."

Here he fumbled about very busily for a few moments, paying no attention to the persuasions and remonstrances of Dangerfield.

"I wish I could find it."

"What?" said the other.

"It is erected to the glorious memory of a fellow that cheated his orphan sisters out of fifty thousand dollars, and tried to cheat heaven by making it an accomplice, and building a church with part of the money. It would surprise you to read what a good man he was for all that; he built this church with part of his sisters' portion. They lie somewhere yonder, without a memorial; but I've an idea they don't howl quite so musically as some folks. See! the business is done," continued he, as the moon emerged from the cloud; "there's some poor damsel the worse for the last half hour; or what's just as likely, there's hot blood smoking on some knife that will be used to cut bread with next Sunday."

Leonard was becoming chilled with cold, and impatient withal at this rambling folly, and asked him,

"Will you go home with me, for the last time?"

"No, I scorn to accept bed or board from any man. I am a fellow of clear estate, and pay my way as I go. I owe nobody a shilling, and here I mean to sleep till doomsday, which is the day before to-morrow, according to last years' almanac—hic jacet—look here—here I am,"

and he threw himself, or rather sunk down on the ground: "Here, between two capital fellows; on one side is a lawyer, who never exerted himself but in a bad cause; and on the other a client, who was ruined by gaining a lawsuit. Worshipful company! Good night, Snortgrace, I must to my studies, now I think of it, and not lie idle here. There's a learned mouse discussing the folios, yonder; I must go and assist him, for some passages are a little too hard for his teeth. Good day, good day, old Snortgrace."

He attempted to rise, but the stiffness occasioned by the chill of the night, added to the exhaustion of his frame by abstinence the whole day, and violent declamations during the preceding interview, had so worn him out that he sunk down again, and became perfectly silent. On attempting to raise him, Dangerfield found his limbs were entirely relaxed, and that he had become insensible. He exerted his strength, lifted his light emaciated body from the ground, and bore him into the house, where he laid him on his own bed, and roused the landlord to his assistance. By degrees he recovered his animation, but his pulse was high, his skin burnt like fire, and a physician being sent for in the morning, pronounced him in a high fever.

CHAPTER XV.

Showing how one enemy drives away another.

THE situation of Rainsford caused great perplexity to Leonard Dangerfield. He could not think of leaving him until all was decided, and his stay would occasion anxiety to his family, unless he accounted for his absence. How to do this he did not know; and in the mean time the patient grew worse. The delirium of fever seemed to have superseded the derangement under which he had previously laboured; and his incoherent talk assumed a new character and direction. His exclamations were rather plaintive than otherwise, and his wild wanderings seemed to have finally settled down into one leading impression, that of a lover deserted by his faithless mistress. Leonard had caused him to undergo a lustration, and clothed him decently from the wardrobe of the worthy landlord, who good naturedly acquiesced, while he shrugged his shoulders, and looked his wonder that so much care should be taken of a mad beggar.

The second day of Rainsford's illness Leonard was most disagreeably surprised by the arrival of the rest of the party, who came to see what had become of him.

"We thought you had lost yourself instead of finding your pocket-book," said Virginia,

gayly. "But what under the sun keeps you here, Leonard? and why did you not write or send?"

Leonard was taken by surprise; he had no excuse or explanation ready; and his hesitation appeared so plain, that like a discreet sister she looked her wonder, and said nothing. What a pity Mrs. Judith Paddock had not been there to profit by her example!

The young man took the earliest opportunity of apprizing his parents of the discovery and situation of Rainsford; and various were the plans proposed and rejected for the purpose of getting Virginia away from this dangerous vicinity without exciting her suspicions. But while this consultation was going on, accident had saved them the trouble of devising schemes of concealment. Virginia having been certified that the room she had formerly occupied was vacant, and in the situation she left it, had retired thither with her waiting-maid, a little ebony damsel, of whose attendance we have hitherto said nothing, presuming it was not necessary to advertise the reader that our heroine had actually such an appendage. While sitting there, her attention was caught by a voice in the next room, which made her start and shudder. It was one she imagined familiar to her ear, dear, still dear to her heart, and it uttered strange incoherent rhapsodies that bespoke a disordered mind. She listened again, but all was silent; and she imagined herself mistaken. But again its incoherent ravings, or rather moanings, met her ear so distinctly, that she could no longer doubt.

"Hark! what dat? who dat, missee?" cried the maid, fearfully.

Virginia did not answer; an irresistible impulse came over her; she started up, rushed to the place whence the voice proceeded; and, careless at this moment of all considerations but one, opened the door, and entered the sick man's room. The quick ear of affection had recognised the voice, and the quick eye of affection at the first glance distinguished the altered features of the poor wanderer. But he did not know her. He lay on his back on the pillow, with his eyes glaring upwards on vacancy, and his lips moving as if unconsciously, sometimes uttering disjointed talk, at others without producing any sounds save low, inarticulate whispers. Virginia neither shrieked, nor wept, nor fainted; she stood like an image of despair gazing on the flushed face, glazed eye, and haggard features of the poor invalid, without uttering a word, or stirring a finger. At length, he seemed to notice her, and, waving his hand, said, in his usual plaintive voice,—

"Go away, go away; I don't want to have any thing more to say to you. What's your name? ah! old Virginia. I was willing to lose my soul for your sake, and you repaid me by breaking my heart. Go away; there's no use in plaguing me any more."

"Rainsford—Dudley Rainsford—don't you know me?" at length she said, in a voice which might have cast out seven raging fiends.

"O yes, I know you of old; once I might have loved such a deceitful face and sweet voice, but I hate all women now; they have

been the plague of my life. One of them brought me into the world to be miserable, and another sent me out of it howling."

Virginia covered her face and wept; for the sound of his voice seemed to unlock the springs of grief that before were closed.

"Ay, ay, you may well weep; but what does that signify? The rain is of no use in the desert where nothing will grow; and I have heard of a cruel, deceitful animal—I forget its name, but I believe it's woman—that always sheds tears when it is going to tear its victim to pieces. Yes, yes, yes—" and here he began again his low, indistinct, disjointed cogitations.

This painful scene was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Dangerfield, who had gone into Virginia's room, and, not finding her there, sought her where she was to be found. Without uttering a word to disturb the invalid, she took her hand, looked in her face with an eye of anxious, affectionate authority, and led her out of the room, without being observed by Rainsford.

The moment they were in private the mother besought, nay, commanded the daughter to accompany her immediately to St. Louis, and spare herself the unnecessary pain of being present, or so near him, at the period now fast approaching when Rainsford's sufferings were about to be brought to a close. She could be of no service, and would only be laying up recollections that would for ever blast her happiness and destroy the repose she might yet attain. The physician, she stated, had already

pronounced his doom; all human aid was vain, and he must die.

"Then let me stay here and pray for him, dear mother," said Virginia.

"You can do that as effectually absent as present."

"But why cannot I wait on him, sit by his bedside, and see that nothing, nothing that human care, that human aid, that affection and gratitude can perform to sooth his last hours, is wanting?"

"My dear daughter, recollect you are not Mr. Rainsford's wife."

"True, mother; but if not here, we shall be united hereafter. I know the forms of the world forbid such things; but here, in this remote region, among strangers whom I shall never see again, and who will never see me; in the presence of you, my father, and Leonard, if sanctioned by your consent, who shall dare to say that in such a situation, and under such circumstances, I should do wrong to obey the impulse of my heart and my reason? Mother, dear mother, I *must* see him, I must be with him when he dies."

"Good heavens! Virginia, why?"

"I have heard that when Providence takes to itself an immortal soul, just when the light is to be extinguished for ever in this world, the reason, which has been obscured or shattered by sickness and suffering, is almost always restored for a little while before the final separation. I must be with him then. I conjure you, as you value my peace, my life, to let me be with him then, that he may know I did not

desert him in his last hour, and forgive, and call me once more his dear Virginia. The recollection of that will be something to dwell upon, and I shall remember him, not as a wayward, wandering maniac, but a kind, rational, dear friend, whose last look recognised, whose last word blessed me. Wilt thou oblige me, dear mother?"

"Your weak state of health and tenderness of heart, my daughter, will sink under such a trial. I dare not trust you."

"Mother, none better know than you, for your own life has proved it so, that neither strength, nor youth, nor nerves, nor sinews, not even Samson himself, though he bore the city gates upon his shoulders, is half so strong, so enduring as true affection. The weakest woman, animated by this, can encounter fatigues, loss of rest, absence of food, yes, every privation of life, with a faith and perseverance to which men can never arrive. For her husband or her offspring she is invincible so long as hope is kept alive in her heart."

"But what hope can you have, my daughter? The doctor says there is nothing to hope."

"Nothing from the doctor; but there is a greater than he, and we know not yet *his* decision. Mother, hear me! I know not how, or when, or whence it came, but I have a conviction—no, not a conviction, but a hope, which almost approaches it—that the crisis is close at hand, and that this fever is destined to produce a great change in the mind of poor Rainsford. It may be folly, it may be fanaticism; but I feel as if *I* could save him, and I alone. My

cares, my affection, my ever-watchful superintendence, aided by the blessing of Heaven, shall yet restore him to his better self, and make him, what he was intended to be, a bright example of genius and virtue."

"But if at last you are disappointed?"

"If so, so be it. If after doing all I can, and fulfilling what I consider a solemn duty dear to my reason and my affection for him who not only saved my life, but who would have devoted his own life to me had it been permitted; should it please Heaven that I am disappointed at last, you shall then see me bear myself as becomes the daughter of such a mother. My conscience will then be at peace, and I have read that we can bear up against any feeling but that of remorse."

"My noble girl!" cried Mrs. Dangerfield, clasping Virginia in her arms, "you shall be gratified. I too will watch, all of us will watch by turns or together; and may the hope you cherish be prophetic!"

From this period the character of Virginia assumed an almost sublime elevation, such as is always the result of the steady, rational, persevering pursuit of one great object. A serene, unchanging, solemn self-possession governed every moment of her life, and no one ever heard her sigh, or saw her weep, or falter for a moment in her attentions to Rainsford. When she did not sit by the bedside of the sufferer, she was ever near, hovering over him like a ministering spirit, watching the expression of his eye, the changes of his countenance, the motions of his muscles, his breathing, and follow-

ing with intense interest the wanderings of his mind, to discover if any ray of reason broke forth from the dark chaos of confusion. The father and brother, though they did not exactly approve her devotedness, could not help admiring and lending their aid to this course of persevering gratitude and affection; but they were utterly hopeless of its consequences. The physician had given it as his opinion that the condition both of his mind and body previous to the fever precluded all rational hope of Rainsford's recovery. He shook his head more significantly every time he came, and repeated his assurances that the crisis of the disease would be followed by immediate dissolution.

The usual state of the young man was that of quiet as to bodily exertion, while his mind seemed perpetually rambling, as appeared by the motion of his lips and occasional mutterings. But he neither raved, nor required force to restrain him; and there was no apprehension of any violence in his conduct. Thus several anxious days passed away, accompanied by increasing weakness on the part of Rainsford, and decreasing hope on the part of his friends.

"He cannot live," said the mother; "he is wasting away every hour. Be prepared, my dear Virginia."

"I am prepared, yet still I hope," replied the daughter.

On the fifteenth day, or rather night, for it was far in the night, it happened that Virginia was sitting in the sick man's room, with no other companion than an old French nurse,

who was now fast asleep in her chair. She was, as usual, anxiously watching his every look and motion, when all at once his low murmurings, which day and night had continued without intermission, ceased, and a dead, awful silence, like that of the grave, succeeded. Virginia snatched a light, and held it over his face. His eyes were closed, and his countenance was that of deathlike repose—of death itself—pale, sunken, and motionless. She took his emaciated hand; it was moist, and the pulse still beat its low alarum. He was asleep, not dead. "The hour is come!" thought Virginia; and, seating herself again, watched, as a mother watches the bed of her last and only offspring when wearied nature, worn out with sickness and pain, seeks a temporary reprieve in the arms of sleep. For a considerable period he neither stirred, nor spoke, nor breathed to the listening ear of Virginia; and often in the dead silence that reigned all around, within and without, in the heavens and the earth, the conviction came over her that now he must be dead. But the unerring witness, the pulse, that still continued its motion, told that the tide of life was yet on its way to the ocean of eternity.

As thus she sat, fearing that every beat would be the last, she felt a tremulous motion in his fingers, his hand was drawn towards his head, a sigh heaved from his breast, and he opened his eyes. They did not glare as wont, but gradually moved around the room, and rested at last on the face of Virginia. He contemplated it for a moment, passed his hand over his

eyes, and uttered, in a low, whispering, weak voice,—

"I thought I saw Virginia, but she's gone."

He looked again wistfully in her face, while she remained motionless, scarcely breathing, scarcely able to breathe, for the conflicting feelings which now rushed on her heart almost choked her.

"Virginia," said he at length, "is it you?"

"Blessed be Providence! he knows me," said the soul of Virginia; but she could not answer.

"I thought so; it is nothing; a dream—or"—here he closed his eyes again, and sunk into another deathlike sleep which lasted an hour or more. Again he awoke as before, and again he saw the same white vision bending over him.

"Virginia," whispered he, for his strength admitted of no more, "is it you, or am I again cheated with a dream or a shadow?"

"It is I," replied the young maiden, scarcely knowing whether she ought to answer him or not.

He tried to raise himself on his elbow to look at her, but his strength failed him, and he again sunk into a doze.

The day was now dawning; the watchful nurse, who usually slept on her post, like many others, for it is the anxiety of affection alone that can keep the eyes wide open night after night, now awoke; and Virginia, motioning her towards where she sat, whispered her to go and summon the physician, who had requested to be called, in the event of any change in his patient. He came while Rainsford was still asleep, and Virginia expressed in a whisper her

hope that this disposition to repose was the forerunner of recovery.

"My dear young lady, never believe it," replied he in the same tone; "it is the precursor of the last sleep; indeed it is doubtful whether he will ever wake. But if he does it will be but for a few hours, and then—"

"Cannot you do something for him, doctor?"

"Nothing; all human aid is vain. It is useless for me to attend here any more. I can do nothing for him. There—he's gone now—his pulse is stopped—no—there it is again—one—two—three—but it's all in vain—let him die in peace—I can do nothing more—good morning." And he departed without ceremony.

"Then I will try," thought Virginia, who remembered having heard many instances of persons recovering after having been given over by the doctors. Nature, indeed, seems often to do wonders when left to herself; or it may be that Providence interposes in these cases sometimes, to remind us how idle is all dependence on the presumptuous ignorance of man.

He had scarcely gone when Colonel Dangerfield appeared at the door, accompanied by a venerable old man. Virginia motioned them not to enter, and went softly out to apprize them of the state of the patient, and the decision of the doctor.

"Will you permit me to see him?" said the old man, in a French accent. "My profession is rather the cure of souls than of bodies; but the nature of my calling, and the vicissitudes of my life have made it necessary that I should

know something of both. At any rate, he will, I presume, if he awakes at all, awake in the possession of his reason. In that case I may pray with him, if I can do nothing more."

"I feel grateful for your kindness, but this young gentleman is not a Catholic."

"Well, never mind," said Father Jacques, as he was called; "we may pray together for all that. Though we may differ in some things, there are others of a thousand times greater consequence, in which we all agree. I am a native of France, but have lived long in this mild and tolerant land, and have not been scourged into bigotry by persecution, or seduced into it by the power of persecuting others. I, at least, cannot do him harm, and may be of service. Permit me to see him, I entreat you. There is no other clergyman in this part of the country."

The good man received the permission, and entered the room where Rainsford was now lying, awake, and in possession of his senses, but so weak that he held on life but by a single hair. Though he had spoken lightly of his skill, Father Jacques had the benefit of general learning, aided by long experience as a missionary among white men and red men; and was indeed far superior to many professed and practising physicians. He saw at once that all that was to be combated now was weakness of body and mind. The disease had left them both free from every thing but that. He prescribed various little remedies for the purpose of keeping the spark alive, until nature had time to rally and resume her functions.

For some days it was a struggle between life and death, time and eternity; and during that period it is not too much to say that he owed his life to the perpetual, the intense cares of Virginia. She never left him; she it was that poured the restoratives of the good Father Jacques, drop by drop, into his mouth; she it was that marked every movement indicating pain or uneasiness; she it was that placed his pillow, or his head; and she it was that, raising herself above the petty affectations that spoil the gentlest of all beings, woman, shrunk from nothing which she thought might conduce to his ease or administer to his recovery. He sometimes attempted to speak to her, to thank her—but she stopped him at once, by declaring that if he persisted she would leave him. But though he spoke not, his eye followed her wherever she went, and his heart was almost bursting with gratitude and love.

As he continued to gather strength, Virginia gradually began to absent herself, or only to visit his chamber in company with her mother. He reproached her for it, and almost wished he were dying again, that he might have more of her society. Relieved in some measure from her intense anxiety, she took an opportunity of inquiring of Leonard the particulars of the discovery of Rainsford. He spared her the relation of the most affecting and revolting part, and contented himself with merely stating that he came there in a high fever and delirium, no one knew from whence. During the progress of his recovery, which was slow and lingering, the good Father Jacques, who had been let into

his history by the family of Dangerfield, came to see him almost every day, conversing with him on the subject of mental maladies, without intimating his knowledge that it could have any particular application to him. He mingled a rational philosophy with a rational religion; took frequent occasion to warn him against the indulgence of a belief in presentiments, which added to actual misfortunes all the miseries of anticipation, without enabling us to avoid or mitigate them; and above all against the spirit of fanaticism, the fruitful source of mental horrors unutterable. The force of calm, dispassionate reason, and unaffected piety, combined, is almost irresistible. Father Jacques neither puzzled him with metaphysics, nor disputed points of faith, but dwelt on topics of practical philosophy, and practical religion, such as all rational beings can comprehend. The difference between this rational old man, and the fiery-headed preacher of the terrors of the bottomless pit was, that the one goaded the apprehensive nervous being to madness, the other soothed him into a firm reliance in the mercies of the Supreme Being.

The good priest saw with honest pleasure the effect produced on the mind of his patient by the course he was pursuing, and was delighted—for there was that about the mind and manners of Rainsford which conciliated and attracted almost all with whom he associated—to discover that he had no distinct recollection of any thing that occurred, from the time of his first derangement to the period of his restoration. He had a vague idea of having lost the

consciousness of some portion of his existence; but Father Jacques insensibly led him into the belief that this was nothing more than the effect of the delirium, which was itself the consequence of his fever. Thus he remained, happily unaware of the incidents of the few last months; and the recollection of the fate of his family, together with the weight of the dreadful presentiment of his own, yielded in a great degree to the reasonings of the good and wise old man, aided by the hope, and almost the belief, that he had now fulfilled his destiny, by his temporary alienation of mind. The period which his fears had always rested upon, as that in which the evil was to come upon him, was now rapidly passing away, and he felt every day more confident. The fact is, his mind was now getting into a healthful state, and life, and all that constitutes its ingredients, began to assume an aspect entirely different from that which they had presented for years past. The fever, and its consequent treatment, had not only entirely broken the habitual concatenation of his ideas, but created, as it were, a new physical man, with new feelings, thoughts, recollections, and anticipations. Still there was at times a certain dreamy consciousness, an indistinct perception, which is as difficult to analyze as to describe, and which prevented his ever making any inquiries into the circumstances or the reasons of his being where he was, when he first came to his recollection.

CHAPTER XVI.

Touching the march of improvement, and the distinction between law and conscience.

When Rainsford was sufficiently recovered, they began to make arrangements for returning to Dangerfieldville. Some anxiety was felt lest the sight of accustomed objects might revive old associations, and renew old feelings in his mind; but it was finally determined that, as in all probability, his fate and that of Virginia were now inseparably united, it was best at once to put his newly acquired state of mind to this test, preparatory to their marriage. Accordingly they took leave of the good Father Jacques, with every expression of gratitude; and Rainsford, especially, regretted that he had no mode of testifying his sense of the obligations he had conferred upon him.

"I shall be satisfied," said the other, "if you will only bear in mind, for the future, that religion is not hatred, but love; and that it was intended to make mankind friends, not enemies."

Having taken leave of the old man, the landlord was summoned to receive his money, and their thanks, for in reality he had conducted himself with uniform courtesy and attention. He came in a most formidable passion, scolding

in tolerable French, and pretty bad English. The colonel inquired the cause.

"Diable! monsieur, another improvement; last year they assess me for one grand public improvement! one road to go somewhere, I don't know. Eh bien! I pay the money. Well, this year they assess me for one other grand public improvement—very grand—voilá, monsieur, one other road, right longside the other, both going to the same place. Diable! I no want to travel on two turnpike roads. Ah! monsieur le colonel, I shall be very rich, O! very rich indeed, by these grand improvements. They take away all my land to make room for the grand improvement; they take away all my money to pay for him, and then they tell me my land worth four, six time so much as before. Peste! what that to me when my land all gone to the dem public improvement, hey? I shall be very rich then. Diable! I wish myself gone to some country where every thing was go backwards—what you call tail foremost, instead of forwards, for the dem march of improvement shall ruin me at last."

When Colonel Dangerfield paid his bill he looked at the money with a rueful countenance, and exclaimed, with a shrug of pious resignation,—

"Eh bien! never mind, make very good road and canal. Morbleu! I shall wonder what they want of these road and canal. Voilà, monsieur! yonder one dem big river, she come two, three thousand mile that way. Eh bien! Voila, monsieur! yonder one t'other dem big river, she come two three thousand mile that

way. Diable! is not this long way enough to travel, without the dem public improvement. Ah! we shall be in ruins soon."

The colonel condoled with the little old man of the old regime, and expressed a hope that times would mend when all the public improvements were finished.

"Eh bien!" replied he; "yes, times will mend when there is nothing else to mend, I think. Monsieur, there is my neighbour, Jan Petit, live right over the way, yonder. Twenty year ago he very rich; he ave every thing comfortable; he fiddle, he dance, he laugh, sing, gallant the demoiselles; no care, no trouble, no dem work at all. He ave one leetle house, one leetle garden, and raise plenty radishes and sallad; he live like leetle king. Eh bien! by-and-by Yankee come; public improvement march this way. Phew! off goes Jan Petit; they cut a street right through his garden; dig up his radishes; pull down his house, and then make him pay for taking away his house, his garden, and his radishes! Voila, monsieur, she ave sometime one, yes, two dozen cambric—what you call? chemise—two dozen, very fine. Well, he now but one left in the world, and that ruin him."

"How so?" asked Colonel Dangerfield, highly amused at the droll complaints of mine host.

"Voilà, monsieur! he pay one laundress by the piece, and begar! he chemise ave so many pieces now, he pay for two dozen every time he is washed. This is one grand consequence of the grand system of the grand internal improvement, as they call him. Morbleu! under

the old regime internal improvement mean improvement of the inside, the head, the comprehension, the understanding; now she mean to dig the grand ditch, to make the grand road, and the grand canal right alongside the grand river. Begar! the river no use now, I think. Ah! monsieur, suppose you had only lived under the old regime; den I shall smoke my pipe, sing, dance, go to church twice every day; no trouble, no improvement, no dem paper money. But the Yankee come, and now a man must do zomezing, or he shall soon ave but one chemise, and be ruined by his laundress like Jan Petit. Ah! monsieur, suppose I one young man. I shall come ome to the old countries, where every thing stand still or go backwards, and be so happy. Ah! 'tis so easy, so charming to go down the ill 'stead of up!"

All things being ready, the colonel left mine host in the midst of his perplexities, and the party turned their faces towards home. Nothing occurred during the journey worthy of record, save that on his arrival at St. Louis Rainsford ordered a suit of rich damask pulpit furniture to be sent to the church over which Father Jacques presided. The good man was delighted with the present, and such was the exultation of his heart as he contemplated the splendours of his little pulpit, that he often prayed to be preserved from the assaults of pride and the seductions of worldly vanity.

As they proceeded on their journey, the heart of Virginia expanded with delighted gratitude at marking the healthful vigour which the mind of Rainsford was every day acquiring.

He seemed to look on the world and every thing in it in a new and animated point of view. Every object of nature appeared to administer to his happiness; and if in contemplating the majesty or beauty of the scenery along the great river he sometimes soared into the regions of imagination, it was with a steady flight, like that of the eagle. A perfect connexion and continuity of ideas marked every thing he said, and it was evident that reason had resumed the reins, in all probability never again to resign them.

It was one of the strongest proofs that fate had at length relented in her persecutions of Rainsford, that on the very morning of the day in which the family of Colonel Dangerfield arrived at home, Master Zeno Paddock and his wife Mrs. Judith departed from the village never to return. Such was the reputation of the proprietor of the Western Sun, and such the extraordinary capacity he had exhibited in the matter of criticism, and, most especially of all, in setting the village together by the ears, that a distinguished speculator, who was going to found a great city at the junction of Big Dry and Little Dry Rivers, made him the most advantageous offers to come and establish himself there, and puff the embryo bantling into existence as fast as possible. He offered him a whole square next to that where the college, the court-house, the church, the library, the athenæum, and all the public buildings were situated. Master Zeno swallowed the square at one mouthful, and Mrs. Judith was utterly delighted to remove to such a fine place, where there

must be so many new secrets to come at. Truth obliges us to say, that on his arrival at the city of New Pekin, as it was called, he found it covered with a forest of trees, each of which would take a man half a day to walk round; and that on discovering the square in which all the public buildings were situated, he found, to his no small astonishment, on the very spot where the court-house stood on the map, a flock of wild turkeys gobbling like so many lawyers, and two or three white-headed owls sitting on the high trees listening with most commendable gravity. Zeno was marvellously disappointed, but the founder of New Pekin swore that it was destined to be the great mart of the West, to cut out St. Louis, Cincinnati, and New Orleans, and to realize the most glorious speculation that was ever conceived by the sagacity or believed by the faith of man. Whereupon Zeno set himself down, began to print his paper in a great hollow sycamore, and to live on anticipation, as many great speculators had done before him. Poor Mrs. Judith was bitterly disappointed in the splendours and magnitude of the city. She never got possession of but one secret, and, as fate would have it, there was not a single gossip within forty miles to tell it to. Whereupon, in a fit of despair she went and whispered it to the air on a certain spot on the bank of Big Dry River, whence in good time there sprung up a grove of little poplars that did nothing but whisper and wag their leaves if but a zephyr blew. At length, this worthy woman died of an intermitting fever, in consequence of

a great overflow of Big Dry River, and her last words were, "I shall get at the secret now!"

The absence of these two incendiaries from Dangerfieldville was a great blessing to Rainsford and Virginia, since it relieved them from the plague of two pestilent busybodies always prying into the affairs of others, and always betraying them the first opportunity. Great was the joy of Mr. Littlejohn at the return of the family, and great the exultation with which he detailed the vast improvements he had made during their absence; how he had grafted six apple-trees, planted a whole row of parsnips, weeded nearly one-half of a bed of salad in a single morning, pulled up a great thistle that grew in the lawn with his own hand, and caught a catfish that weighed thirty-six pounds and a half. This, it seems, crowned the series of his glorious exploits, for we cannot find that he did any thing worthy of record from that time until the arrival of the colonel. Truth obliges us to confess that many of the chairs bore shrewd testimony that the old habit of reclining on three at a time had not been neglected by Mr. Littlejohn.

The Black Warrior and Bushfield were not wanting in their duty, but came to see the colonel as soon as they heard of his arrival.

"Little squaw no look so white now as when she go away," said the warrior.

Virginia blushed a little, and looked at somebody.

"Well, colonel," said Bushfield, "I've let go the willows at last. I can't go it any longer here."

"Why, what's the matter?" asked the other.

"O, every thing is getting so dense here, that a man can't turn round, or say his soul is his own. There's that interloper that has *located* himself just under my nose, about five miles off, I caught him in the very fact of shooting a deer on my side of the river, I'll be goy blamed if I didn't, colonel. Well, what would you have a man do? I challenged him to take a shot at from a hundred yards to meeting muzzles. But he's as mean as *gar*-broth. He said he'd bought the land of Uncle Sam, and had as good a right to shoot there as the old man himself. This was more than a dead '*possum* could stand. I wish I may be shot if I didn't lick him as slick as a whistle in less than no time. Well, by George!—would you believe it?—he took the law of me! Only think of the feller's impudence, colonel, to take the law of a gentleman! I paid him fifty dollars for licking him; but if I don't give him a hundred dollars' worth the next time we meet, I'm a coward, anyhow."

The colonel condoled with him, but at the same time advised him to submit to the laws.

"Laws! none of your laws for me, colonel. I can't live where there's law or lawyers, and a feller don't know whether he's right or wrong without looking into a law-book. They don't seem to know any more about conscience than I do about law. Now, for my part, I do just what I think right, and that's what I call going according to my conscience. But colonel," continued he, with a queer chuckle, "I've got into a worse scrape than that business with the squatter."

"No! I'm sorry for that; what is it?"

"Why, you must know, not long after you went away there came a man riding along here that I calculate had just thrown off his moccasins, with another feller behind him in a laced hat, and for all the world dressed like a militia officer. Well, I hailed him in here, for you know I like to do as you would in your own house; and he came to like a good feller. But the captain, as I took him to be, hung fire, and staid out with the horses. So I went and took hold of him like a snapping-turtle, and says I, 'Captain, one would think you had never been inside of a gentleman's house before.' But he held back like all wrath, and wouldn't take any thing. So says I, 'Stranger, I'm a peaceable man anyhow, but maybe you don't know what it is to insult a feller by sneaking away from his hospitality here in Old Kentuck.' I held on to him all the while, or he'd have gone off like one of these plaguy precussion-locks that have just come into fashion. 'Captain,' says I, 'here's your health, and may you live to be a general.' 'Captain!' says the other, 'he's no captain; he's my servant.' 'What!' says I, 'one white man be a servant to another! make a nigger of himself! come, that's too bad!' and I began to feel a little savage. I asked one if he wasn't ashamed to make a slave of a feller-cretur, and the other if he wasn't ashamed to make a nigger of himself; and they got rather obstropolous. I don't know exactly how it came about, but we got into a fight, and I lick'd them both, but not till they got outside the door, for I wouldn't be uncivil anyhow. Well, what do

you think? instead of settling the thing like a gentleman, the feller that had a white man for his nigger, instead of coming out fine, I'll be eternally dern'd if he didn't send a constable after me. Well, I made short work of it, and lick'd him too, anyhow. But I can't stand it here any longer. Poor old Snowball slipped her bridle the other day, and went out like a flash in the pan; so I'm my own master again, with nobody to stand in my way at all. I must look out for some place where a man can live independent, where there's no law but gentlemen's law, and no niggers but black ones. I sha'n't see you again, colonel, it's most likely, so good-by all. I expect you'll be after me soon, for I look upon it to be impossible for a man in his senses to live here much longer, to be hoppled like a horse, and not go where he pleases." And away he marched, with a heart as light as a feather, in search of a place where he might live according to his conscience.

CHAPTER XVII.

A secret which Mrs. Judith would have given her ears to hear.

ANOTHER autumn had now arrived with all its mellow beauties, and the hazy Indian summer threw its soft obscurity over the land, giving to distant objects the tints of an early twilight, and to those more near all the effect of distance. The flowers were all gone, but the rich and varied tints of the woods supplied their places; and though the air was not so genial as that of the laughing, jolly springtime, it possessed an even, sober temperature, that without relaxing the frame, disposed to exercise and activity. Rainsford was now restored to perfect health of mind and body, and Virginia to the sober certainty of happiness. The colonel and Mrs. Dangerfield felt their confidence in the permanency of his recovery every day increasing, and no longer opposed the union of the lovers, who were soon to be united for ever. Their hours passed cheeringly away in the enjoyment of the society of each other, either within doors or in rambles by the river-side. The first time they visited the spot where the demon of fanaticism had tempted him so sorely, Rainsford shuddered at the recollection of that hour. He remembered as a horrid dream his feelings and his purpose at that time, and he

remembered now more deeply, more profoundly, more touchingly than ever what he owed to the kind being he had once devoted to destruction. His heart overflowed with gratitude and tenderness; he looked at her with his soul in his eyes; and it was not so much the touching beauty of her face, the perfection of her form, nor all the harmony of female loveliness he saw before him that occupied his mind, as the idea of the faithful, gentle maiden, who had under so many circumstances of discouragement consented to trust her happiness to his care, and contributed so materially to make him capable of guarding so sacred a deposite. The fulness of his heart overpowered him, and he dropped his head on her shoulder.

Virginia was startled with the apprehension that the sight of old scenes had recalled some of those feelings and apprehensions which she had hoped were now banished for ever from his mind. She asked him fearfully what was the cause of his emotions, and hinted at her suspicions.

"It does, indeed," said he, mournfully, and raising his head, "it does, indeed, remind me of what I would give all the world but you, Virginia, to forget. But you shall know all. You shall know the risk you once encountered from me; but which, I have full faith in Heaven, will never be encountered again. But you shall know all—I will have no secrets from thee, Virginia. Before you give yourself to me for ever, it is proper, it is my sacred duty to disclose what I have intended, as well as what I have done. My honour demands it of me."

He then detailed the turn given to his mind, already almost overborne with the presentiment which had poisoned so great a portion of his cup of existence, by the fiery fanatic who had preached in the village the year preceding. He painted the struggles of his feelings; the final adoption of his determination; the time and manner in which he so nearly completed his purpose; and his final abandonment, after a contest which brought on the fever, that, owing to the blessings of her fostering care, had terminated in his restoration to happiness. We have before observed, that Rainsford had lost all recollection of the period which elapsed between his first derangement and his recovery.

"Now, Virginia, you know all, and here, on the spot where you first pledged yourself to be mine, do I now give you full liberty to withdraw it. I love you with an affection made up of every ingredient that can enter into the composition of love; true, lasting, and unwavering love. I will, if after this you dare trust me, devote myself, my time, my talents, my very soul, to your happiness. Whatever you wish me to be, that will I be. If retirement, and domestic occupations be your wish, so shall it be. If honour, if ambition allure you, I feel I have that within me can make me whatsoever I strive to become; and you shall see me, if I live, take any place wherever you point your finger. Now, Virginia, once more my fate is in your hands—decide, and for ever. Dare you trust me after this?"

"As I did before it; as I shall for ever after

it," said Virginia, firmly, and without hesitation.

Rainsford clasped her, for the first time, in his arms, and called her by every name dear to the heart of woman.

"I have not broken my oath," said he, releasing her, "for I can now look back upon the past, and forward to the future, with a confident hope, a settled conviction that I have fulfilled my destiny; I have a presentiment, dearest Virginia."

"Ah! Rainsford, beware of presentiments. If they are ever prophetic, it is that they contribute, like prophecies, to their own fulfilment. I am convinced that the true source of various maladies of mind and body, is in the predisposition given by a presentiment that they will surely happen."

"True—most certain—where did you become so wise," said Rainsford, smiling.

"Have I not a wise and virtuous mother?" was the sensible reply. "But now that you have told your secret, I will tell you mine."

"Yours? you secrets too? Beware, or I shall take you for another Mrs. Judith Paddock."

"Yes, I; I knew of the intention you have just disclosed, at the time."

"You? you?" cried he, in astonishment. "You knew it?"

"Yes, Rainsford; you thought I was looking at the evening star, when you held the weapon over me. But I saw it."

"And neither shrieked, nor fled nor fainted at the time; nor hated me afterwards! O, Vir-

ginia, may Heaven bless thee! But how, how was it possible?"

"You forget," said she, modestly, "who, and what I am; I call myself a daughter of Old Kentucky. You forget that when we first came hither, danger walked like the pestilence, in daylight and in darkness, through these forests; that we never laid down at night without the expectation that before morning we should be roused by the yell of death; that we never, for years, could calculate an hour on the possession of life; and that I, yes, Rainsford, I and my dear mother, have more than once stood by our husband and father, when the savages were approaching to set fire to our house, loading the guns that he and his people were discharging at the painted warriors. You forget that we had become familiar with death, and that the spot on which we stand is part of that region called the 'dark and bloody ground.' Are you not afraid I shall shoot you one of these days?" added she, playfully.

"No, by Heaven! I am only afraid I shall always, when I approach you, feel as the fox did when he came into the presence of the lion."

"O yes! I thank you. But don't you remember how soon the fox got over this?"

"Well, well, my sweetest, best Virginia, though I may not fear, I hope you will allow me to worship you?"

"O, by all means, provided you won't treat me as the worshippers of idols sometimes do their wooden divinities, when they don't grant their unreasonable desires."

The horn, which it was customary to blow,

for the purpose of summoning the labourers to dinner, now echoed far and wide, reminding them of the progress of the time, and they turned towards home with lighter steps and lighter hearts than they had known for many a day.

On a certain Christmas eve, Virginia, having completed her twentieth year, which put her in possession, as Rainsford now learned for the first time, of a handsome fortune, left her by an aunt, when but a year old, resigned to his care a heart worth all the jewels of the Persian diadem, a person lovely and pure as the first flower of spring. We will not describe her dress, or that of the bridegroom, for we fear they were both deplorably deficient in fashion and material. We have heard confidentially that the costume of the bride contained no more than twelve yards of muslin, which the milliners, whom we consider the highest authority, assure us, is one-third less than appertains to a reasonable woman, meaning a woman of reasonable dimensions. As for master Dudley Rainsford, he had no whiskers, and that is quite enough to consign him to utter oblivion in the ranks of fashion. There was neither waltz nor gallopade danced on the occasion, but of all the happy faces and white teeth ever exhibited in this new world those that peeped into the doors, and eke the windows too, of Colonel Dangerfield, were the happiest and the whitest. There stood Pompey Ducklegs the Great, who still lives, and if it is in our power to make him, shall live for ever, whose masticators still held out in all their glorious array